

THE QUEST FOR RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE DIMENSIONS AND DISCIPLINES OF PASTORS
WHO EFFECTED FRESH MISSIONAL
IMAGINATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN FIFTEEN CANADIAN
CONGREGATIONS

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Preface

I have exercised ministry in two spheres over the years. I have been an itinerant evangelist, pioneering Youth for Christ in my native Scotland. I served Youth for Christ as an evangelist at large in the USA.

I currently serve C2C Network, a Canadian church planting network as National Missiologist. In these trans-local roles, I have started new works and come alongside congregations and ministries to fan the flames of evangelism. Ever since my days as an adolescent preacher I have wanted lost people to have saving encounters with Jesus, and for the church to share that desire.

I have also served in the local church in both associate and senior pastor roles. In my local church leadership, I have always been deeply concerned about the congregational evangelism temperature and reaching the lost. As an adjunct youth ministry professor, I called my students to embrace youth work as a missionary enterprise.

During a season of transition and frustration I had a significant conversation with a mentor. He told me that I had five options to exercise my gift as an evangelist. He told me I could attempt to operate as a solo evangelist, or find a place on an evangelistic team as an associate. He indicated that these opportunities were receding. Leighton offered a third option. I could serve as a pastor or director of evangelism at a large church. He indicated that this could prove a frustrating experience. Finally, he offered two further options. I could invest in church planting or creating a culture of evangelism in an existing church. These two options resonated with me. Back then, church planting was not an opportunity. I pursued, for better or worse, the intriguing and elusive idea of creating a culture of evangelism in and through a local church.

The idea of a church captivated by Jesus and his gospel and motivated to make him known, continues to agitate me. Concepts like apostolic congregations, church for the unchurched, and externally focused congregations, all have intrigued and inspired me. The idea of alerting people to the reign of God in Jesus Christ through word and deed (and even signs and wonders) continues to agitate me. My wide travels and expansive network led me to the unhappy conclusion that most North American churches do not see

the mission of God as their organizing principle. Most churches do not intentionally work for the welfare of their city. Most congregations are not vigorously pursuing the salvation of the lost in their communities. My assessment is that most North American congregations function as “Private Club.” Whatever the stated core values, bold and winsome evangelism and innovative missional engagement tend to be aspirational notions rather than observable behaviors.

I have been lead pastor of a small (single cell) American congregation and a large Canadian church. The ecclesial species and the ministry contexts differed but each presented a similar challenge. Each congregation exhibited significant inertia regarding proclaiming the gospel, reaching the lost and serving their respective communities as an expression of God’s kindness.

Small Church grew, for a season, under my leadership. However, we were never able to move from the inherited dysfunctional operating system. We saw some conversions, and some prodigals return to God. We witnessed some healings. I used talk radio as a regional outreach. The Alpha Course became a staple of congregational life. We ran soccer camps as a community outreach. We started a faith based after school club to love, serve, and reach at risk elementary school kids.

Large Church was the product of a merger. It became multi-site by virtue of the merger, not for the sake of the mission! My conclusion was that the two campuses were indications that the merger was a myth. It was overstaffed and functioned with the missional passivity of an attractional model. The staff were more occupied with programs and job descriptions than reaching the lost. My predecessor was asked what his vision for the church was. His response? “That we offer an inspiring worship service this weekend.” When pressed to cast a vision further into the future, he responded, “to offer an inspiring service the following weekend.”

Both of these settings raised questions of organizational transformation, the need to move people from consumption to contribution, and the challenge of raising the evangelism temperature in a local church. Both of these congregations drove home the axiom: people don’t resist change they resist being changed. Both settings proved personally costly and despite some fruitful ministry, and some innovation, the desired culture shift proved elusive. Put plainly, I failed as a renaissance leader.

My role in C2C Network involves not only supporting fledgling churches on mission but supporting established congregations to follow Jesus on mission. If Canada is to be reached for Christ, it will require not only the launching of brand new gospel centered, Spirit led, mission focused enterprises. It will require that tired, flat and troubled established churches experience new life and out of the overflow of the renewal and freedom that comes from fresh Holy Spirit encounters they join God in his work in the world.

I am persuaded that there is a desperate need for the Canadian church to experience renewal and recover apostolic confidence in the gospel. I am convinced that not only the planting of new churches but the missional renaissance of older congregations is needed to disciple the nations that have come to Canada. In order to spark fresh gospel fires and catalyze the church for mission, the church must transition from installing shepherds and teachers at the helm.

With my biases as an apostolic-evangelist, my experiences in local church ministry, my parachurch pedigree, and my enduring conviction that the church must faithfully follow Jesus on mission I embarked on this research project. Knowing that leadership is pivotal I went on the quest for renaissance leadership. This is the kind of leader, by virtue of gifting, and the kind of practices that prove fruitful and effective in missional renewal.

ABSTRACT

Most twenty-first century Canadian churches are either plateaued or in decline. While church planting is vital, the need for the missional renewal of existing churches represents both a crisis and an opportunity.

This project evaluated pastoral leadership in fifteen Canadian congregations in order to identify effective strategies for the missional renewal. This project orbited around two questions. What type of *person*, in terms of gifting, is best suited to the heaving lifting of missional renewal? What are the *practices* that best foster fresh missional impulse in a flat or failing congregation? This project used standardized interviews to gather qualitative data about the leader and the congregational change journey. In addition, leadership diagnostics were used to assess primary and secondary leadership gifts.

This project revealed that missional renaissance is best effected by pastors with *apostolic bias*. 80% of the research subjects fell into this category with apostle as either their primary or secondary gift. The leaders who proved effective change agents voiced a strong sense of call and tended to have lengthy pastorates. Effective change agents experienced pain and brokenness in their journeys, practiced holistic self-care and maintained a vibrant spirituality. The effective pastor experienced personal renewal during the church transformation. Critical practices identified were: gospel recalibration, following an intentional change pathway, developing discipleship by design, personal mastery, and relationality. Discerning how deeply into the performative or reactive zones the congregation is, and the ability to respond appropriately was identified as a critical discipline.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

All Organizations Either Die or Renew

Life is governed by seasons. Farmers, fashion designers, and sports fans all plan and prioritize around seasons. The Preacher reminds his readership that life consists of seasons and that wisdom involves adapting to the distinct rhythms of these varied seasons.¹

Organizations can be understood in light of seasons, developmental stages, or life cycles. “Groups of people working together-organizations-have seasons of life just like in nature. They are born, grow, enter middle age, and eventually reach the calcification of old age. These milestones roughly correspond to those of our own lives: infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood, and midlife, the greying years, old age, and yes, death.”²

Organizational life may be understood as consisting of three stages: birth and early life, mid-life, and maturity. In the organizational maturity stage the organization is faced with the prospect of death or transformation. Alternately, the life of an organization can be distinguished by the following stages: start-up; growth; decline, and then either renewal or death.

Leadership involves identifying the organizational season or stage and discerning appropriate change strategies to address the dynamics of moving the organization to a new season of health and growth.

The organization that resists change will invariably experience slow death. “Entropy – the dissipation of energy, slow death- operates on both the human ego and the

¹ Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. All Scripture references are taken from the New International Version (2011) unless otherwise stated.

² Hans Finzel, *Change is like a Slinky* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2004), 241-242.

organizational culture. Individuals and organizations are continually pulled toward entropy.”³

The Need for Organizational Renewal

A once flourishing organization can face stagnation, irrelevance, and decline, lose its market share, and even go out of business. A vibrant organization marked by innovation can face slow death. It follows that organizations and organizational leaders must address the need for renewal. “Nothing on earth lives forever...no living organism goes on forever. Instead, life expresses itself in cycles of birth and death, emergence and decline. The persistence of the species is assured not by the preservation of an individual specimen but by the capacity of each generation to sow the seeds of the next.”⁴

Churches Either Die or Renew

The Life Span of the Church

Reportedly, 80% -85% of North American churches have either plateaued or are in decline.⁵ Congregational decline through the organizational life cycle often begins after 15 years.⁶ In other words, the challenge of congregational entropy must be faced as a church moves beyond its infancy. The challenge of mounting a church revitalization is enormous. “Turning around a declining church is not easy. Most won't make the change.

³ Robert Quinn, *Building The Bridge as You Walk On It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,2004), vii.

⁴ Alice Mann, *Can our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute,2000), 1.

⁵ Ed Stetzer, “Networking for Comeback Change,” The Exchange Blog, May 1, 2009, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.edstetzer.com/2009/05/networking-for-comeback-change.html> .

⁶ I have had several conversations around this phenomenon with Dr. Linus Morris the former President of Christian Associates International.

And, that should not surprise us. Sick people and sick institutions don't naturally change by themselves.”⁷

Mann⁸ traces the congregation across a life cycle with stages of: birth, formation, stability, decline, and death. During the formation period, the identity of the congregation is identified. The congregation grapples with three defining questions: Who are we? What are we here for? Who is our neighbor? The congregation moves into “a period of fruitful and sustainable ministry.” Stability occurs “when a congregation has forged a clear faith identity and has organized its life to express that faith effectively and persistently within its ministry context.”⁹

Churches are entities, which like all human organizations, are subject to the organizational life cycle. Businesses, charities, ministries, and congregations must contend with the organizational life cycle. While a congregation as part of the mystical body of Christ is a spiritual organism, it is also an organization. As an organization it is subject to the scrutiny of disciplines like sociology and organizational development. Its constituents are flesh and blood people working together, and thus collectively the members of a congregation will undergo the seasonal shifts of the life cycle. Founding members and pioneers dream of a brand new gospel outpost and preside over its launch. They pray and work together during its wobbly infancy and share in the growing formation and stabilization of what was once a fledgling work. They may succumb to nostalgia collectively rather than fresh gospel innovation. As nostalgia seeps into the congregation’s soul the sobering reality that this once vibrant work is actually in decline,

⁷ Ed Stetzer, “Networking for Comeback Change,” The Exchange Blog, May 1, 2009, accessed Oct. 15, 2013, <http://www.edstetzer.com/2009/05/networking-for-comeback-change.html>. Stetzer’s language regarding sickness may be deemed unhelpful but does illustrate the challenge of congregational change.

⁸ Alice Mann, *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*, 22-36.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

may be missed or ignored by the members. It is possible that the leaders and stakeholders may have to contend with the spiritual demise of the congregation.

Thus, congregations must navigate the rhythms and challenges of the seasons of birth, infancy, adolescence, maturity and even face the unpalatable dilemma of death. A once flourishing congregation that served as a missional outpost, with laser beam focus on a God inspired vision can flounder. A once vibrant work infused with missionary zeal and a passion for life transformation can fail. This raises the question of what causes and effects create an impetus towards decline and death in the life of a congregation. Why do churches die?

Challenges of Renewing Churches

Congregational renewal must be addressed with intentionality and focus. The local church, as a communitarian expression of the mystical Body of Christ is part of a divine enterprise. However, it is also a human organization. Jesus declares that he will build His Church.¹⁰ Thus, God will fulfill His mission and purposes through the Church universal. Human beings are “living stones,” they are the construction materials of the church.¹¹ The church must be understood theologically through a variety of metaphors that are employed in Scripture to describe the nature and function of the Church.

These metaphors communicate the nature of being and becoming the people of God. The Church of Jesus Christ can be understood as the family of God, the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ, a holy temple or spiritual building, and as God’s missionary. The Church is God’s missionary in the world and to the world. The local church is God’s

¹⁰ Matthew 16: 13-20 and note 16:18 where Jesus expresses his unequivocal commitment to the life of the ecclesia.

¹¹ 1 Peter 2:5.

missionary to the city, town, neighborhood, or community. Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”¹² Jesus launched a movement, endued by His Spirit to bear witness for him and make him known locally and globally.¹³

While the church can be understood theologically and biblically as a divinely ordained spiritual organism, it also must be viewed as a human organization. Viewed through the lens of organizational development, a local church is comprised of a matrix of several elements: philosophy, stated and actual values, structures, leadership, interpersonal and group dynamics, internal culture, and external environment or context. From the perspective of organizational development, the church will experience organizational life cycles. Congregations can be understood to be governed by the Sigmoid Curve and will therefore contend with the associated dynamics of initiation, growth and success, and decline. As congregations move beyond enthusiastic launch and infancy and maturity, the dynamics of entropy must be addressed.

The aforementioned period of stability cited by Mann can become a stagnation stage that puts a congregation on the path to decline. Spiritual and institutional stability can become the impetus towards decline and death. Priorities askew of God’s design and God’s dream for the life of a congregation will position the body for decline and death. “Many churches skip over the issues of spiritual formation early in their lives. More often; the lack of priority given to faith development in the church’s first years *will leave an indelible imprint on its personality.*”¹⁴

A church, during its infancy or formation stage may focus on fabrics, fittings, finance, property acquisition, mortgage pay down, and largely ignore the transformative

¹² John 20:21.

¹³ Acts 1:8.

¹⁴ Alice Mann, *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*, 5 italics added.

work of disciple making and lose sight of Jesus' mission. The wrong-focused congregation may only be moved out of its rut through a crisis and at great cost. "A church like this may begin to grapple seriously with spiritual questions only after a major crisis provokes a soul-searching look at its own history and values."¹⁵

Part of the role of leadership is provoking this soul searching. Nelson asserts that implementing change and navigating the conflict that organizational change precipitates is intrinsic to leadership.

"(President) Truman popularized the saying, "If you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen." My philosophy of leaders is, "If you can't create some heat get out of the kitchen." Leaders deal with change, and change and conflict go hand in hand."¹⁶

Renewal as Shifting to a Missional or External Focus

Externally focused congregations are rare in the North American landscape. George G. Hunter III champions externally focused ecclesial paradigms, namely, "apostolic congregations," and church for the unchurched. He claims only one percent of North American churches embrace these paradigms.¹⁷ Hunter's assertion that congregations that are avowedly externally focused are few and far between, is supported by Rainer. In his quest for what he labels, "breakout churches," Rainer dismissed US churches that were not evangelistically effective according to criteria he established in prior research. He claims that this eliminated 96% of American churches.¹⁸ Rainer's

¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶ Alan E Nelson, *Leading Your Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 227.

¹⁷ Hunter taught several modules in my Masters Class in '98. On the release of his *Celtic Way of Evangelism*, I interviewed him for my radio show and took the opportunity to speak off-air and thank him for his investment in my life. This conversation likely took place in the summer of 2001. See George G. Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Thom Rainer, *Breakout Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 23.

claims are not only sobering or even alarming, his analysis points to the need for leadership approaches that precipitate externally focused congregations.

Cole laments the absence of reproductive DNA in churches across North America.

The Southern Baptists have said that only 4% of the churches in America will plant a daughter church. That means that 96% of the conventional churches in America will never give birth. Based on experience I believe this statistic is true. Even worse, I suspect that a majority of the 4% who do give birth will do so with unwanted pregnancies, which we call church splits.¹⁹

A specific leadership species is required to bring about organizational renewal. Renaissance leadership that results in revitalization and engagement in Jesus' mission is needed. These leaders are "...high octane, out-of-the-box types who (are) willing to try anything if it (means) reaching more people with the gospel. ...Apostolic leaders believe they are responsible for fulfilling the Great Commission." ²⁰ McNeal claims that the leader who will prove effective in organizational change resulting in an externally focused congregation will be a "kingdom-focused, entrepreneurial, developer, collaborator, spiritual, visionary." ²¹

Bennis²² identifies leadership as embodying character, integrity, and vision. "The first basic ingredient of leadership is a *guiding* vision. The leader has a clear idea of what he wants to do – professionally and personally and the strength to persist in the face of setbacks, even failures."²³ Renaissance leaders will articulate a compelling, clear vision.

¹⁹ Neil Cole, "Multiplying on the Micro Level," CMA Church Resources Church Planting Blog, May 15, 2008, accessed May 13, 2015, https://www.cmaresources.org/article/multiplying-on-the-micro-level_neil-cole.

²⁰ Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2003), 126.

²¹ Personal correspondence with Reggie McNeal November 2, 2011.

²² Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1989).

²³ *Ibid.*, 39.

Bennis's second criterion is passion.²⁴ The renaissance leader should be able to not only communicate a compelling vision of God's preferred future but also exude a palpable passion for Jesus, his gospel, and lost people.

The renaissance leader is a change agent who exerts organizational influence towards mission. This will result in ministries that do not simply serve the congregation's constituents but give expression to God's love to people and needs in the community.

The focus of the congregation's time and resources; the leader's time, talents, treasure, relationships; ministry staff focus and investment will all reveal if a church body is focused outward or if it is merely the provider of religious goods and services for its established clientele. These will provide indications of inward or outward focus – and centripetal or centrifugal movement.

Frost proposes evaluating external focus through weighing measurable metrics such as allocation of finances, staffing, use of property, and requirements of membership. Frost's evaluation of congregations pursuing missional engagement involves surveying members of missional communities and identifying how much time they spend in community activities, socializing, to whom they gave their money, with whom they practiced hospitality.

In ascertaining if a congregation is externally focused, Frost suggests identifying the percentage of the church's total budget allocated to the poor, the neighborhood, and to mission.²⁵ He also suggests examining building use and identifying the percentage of time that a property is used by external groups. Frost further proposes that staff

²⁴ Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader*, 40.

²⁵ "Missional Markers." E-mail message to author. September 26, 2011.

deployment is informative: “What percentage of the staff’s time is oriented externally?”²⁶

Formal congregational expectations regarding membership may prove informative. Frost proposes asking if “members have any responsibility (or a) covenant to practice hospitality, and to join neighborhood groups.”²⁷

A renaissance leader will be instrumental in moving a congregation outwards and fostering an environment and creating a culture that is demonstrably more committed to mission as a result of intentional and strategic change. Leaders who have successfully navigated change and revitalization strategies resulting in greater missional and evangelistic vigor will provide rich learning for those who sense God’s call to effect congregational change.

The Challenges of the Canadian Context

Canada faces contextual challenges that make fresh missional imagination and engagement urgent issues. This brings into focus the need for congregations to experience renewal and the need for effective renaissance leadership.

Firstly, Canada’s dechristianization requires reinvigorated congregations engaging in missional innovation. The historic posture of attractional congregations operating with an “if you build it, they will come,” mindset will face diminishing redemptive returns.

Canada’s dechristianization²⁸ has created a population of secular moralists.²⁹

William Stahl claims that, “Up until World War I, religion was the foremost badge of

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Reginald Bibby, “The Canadian Religious Situation,” *The National Post*, May 26, 2014, accessed December 12, 2016 <http://www.reginaldbibby.com/images/BibbyreligcensusGlobe03.pdf>.

identity in Canada—people thought of themselves first as Protestant or Catholic (a role played since then by language).”³⁰ Noll³¹ argues that Canada in the 1960s was “more Christian “and religious than the U.S. In the 1960s Canadian dechristianization gained rapid pace. This trend has continued to gain ground into the twenty first century. The congregation maintaining attractional business as usual faces disappointment and diminishing influence. The segment of the population predisposed to attending a weekend worship gathering is shrinking, particularly amongst the emerging generations.³² This trend will continue as McNeal remarks, “Disinterest in institutional Christianity will accelerate.”³³

In 1971, 4% of all Canadians had no religious affiliation. In 2014, one in four of all Canadians self-reported as “nones.”³⁴ The Canadian setting can be defined by *liminality*. This involves the disestablishment of the church whereby the church is societally invisible.³⁵ The Canadian Church must contend with its growing “outsiderhood.”³⁶ Religious ideas and institutions have moved from the center of Canadian society to the sidelines.³⁷ This requires missional leadership that can navigate

²⁹ The description of Canada as a nation of secular moralists was made by Dr. John Stackhouse, tracing the rapid post-second world war dechristianization of the country at the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches bi-annual Study Conference in Edmonton, October 2013.

³⁰ William Stahl, “Is Anyone in Canada Secular?” In *Secularism and Secularity*, Kosmin Barry A. & Keysar Ariela (eds.), Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society & Culture, July 7, 2009, 60. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/17142803/Secularism-Secularity-Contemporary-International-Perspectives#scribd>

³¹ Mark A. Noll, *What Happened to Christian Canada?* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2007), 18ff.

³² Michael Frost, *The Road to Missional* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 18-19.

³³ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009), 179.

³⁴ Joseph Brean, “Holy Post : one in four Canadians declare affiliation to no religion,” *The National Post*, May 26, 2014, accessed May 26, 2014 http://news.nationalpost.com/holy-post/one-in-four-canadians-declare-affiliation-to-no-religion-but-why-are-so-many-nones-surprisingly-religious#__federated=1.

³⁵ For a missiological exposition of the implications of this see Alan J. Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership & Liminality* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1997).

³⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

³⁷ This plight would not have stymied apostolic era leadership, as Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, the primitive Jesus movement did not enjoy privileged status or political clout.

this post-Christian context and equip and release the people of God on mission for “such a time as this.”

Growing numbers of Canadians are disenfranchised from organized institutional religion. Hence, the steadily growing numbers of “nones.”³⁸ Anthony Giddens and Charles Taylor contend for “dis-embedding” as defining this societal trend. They both view this as a central and ongoing characteristic of modernity. “In traditional society individuals were embedded in their communities; that is, people’s identities were shaped within the bounded context of religion, authority, and view of the cosmos. As Taylor puts it, ‘From the standpoint of the individual’s sense of self, [embeddedness] means the inability to imagine oneself outside a certain matrix.’”³⁹

The province of Quebec brings this issue into sharp focus. Once dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, Quebec is the least reached real estate in all of the Americas.⁴⁰ Less than 0.5% of Quebec self-identify as evangelical Christian, which is less than evangelical density of Pakistan.⁴¹

Secondly, the precipitous decline of mainline churches calls for renewal. Since 1980, 2.9 churches closed weekly in Canada. Canada’s three mainline denominations—Anglican, United, and Presbyterian will close somewhere between 6000 and 8000

³⁸ This trend varies regionally and provincially across Canada. In Vancouver, B.C. 40% self-identify as having no religious affiliation. This trend will be dampened by the influx of immigrants adhering to faiths such as Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Hinduism.

³⁹ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 55, quoted in Barry Alexander Kosman and Ariela Keysar, *Secularism and Secularity*, 70.

⁴⁰ Ed Stetzer has identified Quebec as the least evangelized territory in North, Central, and South America. He communicated this missiological trend at a C2C Network training event in Vancouver, BC on Feb 5, 2014.

⁴¹ Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* (Colorado Springs: Biblical Publishing, 2010) 658.

congregations by 2024.⁴² This ecclesial decline presents again the challenge of experiencing deep change or death.

Thirdly, a growing global trend finds expression across Canada.

The 21st century will not be dominated by America or China, Brazil or India, but by the city. In an age that appears increasingly unmanageable, cities rather than states are becoming the islands of governance on which the future world order will be built. This new world is not -- and will not be -- one global village, so much as a network of different ones.⁴³

Canadian churches live in a shifting context with growing urbanization.⁴⁴“In 1901, 37% of Canadians lived in urban areas. By 2006, that figure had risen to 80%. Two-thirds of Canadians now live within 33 urban centers with populations of more than 100,000.”⁴⁵

The Canadian church must awaken to the missional challenge and opportunity of the city. Cities are strategic centers and are significant foci in the pursuit of Jesus’ mission. Cities are densely populated communities with the next generations of young adults and young people. Congregations must embrace the city as a mission field. Cities are global catch basins. Waves of least reached people groups and unreached people have moved into urban centers through immigration.⁴⁶ Immigration has fueled Canadian multiculturalism and diversity. Toronto is hailed as the most culturally diverse city in the

⁴² Craig Kraft, Executive Director of Outreach Canada claimed at C2C’s Multiply Conference in Calgary, AB in May 2014 that the three mainline denominations would close a combined 6000 to 8000 congregations in the next ten years.

⁴³ Beyond City Limits in Foreign Policy Sept/Oct 2010, originally accessed November 5, 2014, www.foreignpolicy.com/2010/08/06/beyond-city-limits.

⁴⁴ 81% of Canadians live in urban centers.

⁴⁵ Cited by Leonard Hjalmanson, *Text and Context*, (Portland, OR: Urban Loft Publishers, 2013), 17.

⁴⁶ Canada boasts the “most international city in the world”, Toronto, where 9-1-1 emergency services operators are equipped to respond in over 150 languages. The province of Alberta is a hot zone of immigration through a steady influx of foreign students. 40% of Canada’s international students choose to pursue their studies in Alberta. This is a significant immigration pathway, as half of all students indicate that they want to stay in Alberta on conclusion of their studies.

world with 51% of its population born outside of Canada. Congregations must embrace the city as a mission field and give expression to the gospel as churches in the city and for the city, pursuing the welfare of the city.⁴⁷

The role of leadership in missional church renewal

Organizational renewal requires leadership. Organizational culture cannot be transformed without leadership. Leadership that exudes clarity (vision) and leadership that exhibits courage, since change and conflict inevitably emerge as next-door neighbors, if not Siamese Twins!

Leadership is pivotal in the change journey. “The primary reason improvement issues fail or succeed is leadership. The primary reason improvement issues fail or succeed is leadership. No, the editor did not miss an error. In spite of all the complexities of church improvement, leaders and the way they catalyze change is key.”⁴⁸

The need for leadership to effect change to may be self-evident. However, the question at hand is what kind of leadership precipitates organizational transformation? What are the qualities, practices, and disciplines of the person who leads organizational renewal? What kind of leader will prove fruitful and effective in leading a flat or stagnant, defeated, dysfunctional, or broken company of God’s people into a new day of redemptive energy and ministry? What is “The Right Stuff”⁴⁹ for renaissance leadership?

The discipline of church planting has historically identified building blocks which constitute “the right stuff” for a leader launching a new faith community. Assessment

⁴⁷ Jeremiah 29:4-7.

⁴⁸ Alan Nelson and Gene Appel, *How to Change Your Church Without Killing It* (Nashville: W Publishing, 2000), 100.

⁴⁹ *The Right Stuff 30th Anniversary ed.*, directed by Philip Kaufman, screenplay by Philip Kaufman (Warner Bros., 1983), BluRay (Warner Bros., 2013).

processes have been developed around “the right stuff.” Charles Ridley identified thirteen characteristics for a successful church planter.⁵⁰ These were modified, and expanded into fifteen characteristics, for Canadian Church Planting Assessment Centers administered by C2C Network.⁵¹ The first five qualities: emotional health; relational ability; marriage and familial strength; personal integrity, and relationship with God are deemed non-negotiable.⁵² The fifteen together form a rubric for assessing the church planting candidate and inform the final assessment disposition.

In the quest for leaders with “The Right Stuff,” C2C Network transitioned, in 2015, from the classic Ridley-based matrix to a CLI (Church Leader Inventory) with ten dimensions. These dimensions are: integrity, personal spirituality, missional engagement, visioning capacity, gospel communication, learning agility, emotional stability, family life, and leadership courage. These are lenses through which candidates are viewed and scrutinized during the residential intensive Assessment Centre.⁵³

While the assessment center focuses on these ten dimensions; close attention is paid to four “Leadership Stallers.” These negative characteristics will hinder effectiveness, relationships, personal growth, and vocational success. Depending on the degree of these stallers, they can eventually undermine all of the positive dimensions.

⁵⁰ From his field research amongst US and Canadian planters he identified: visioning capacity, intrinsic motivation, creating ministry ownership, ability to relate to the unchurched, spousal cooperation, effectiveness in building relationships, commitment to church growth, responsiveness to community, utilization of the gifts of others, flexibility and adaptability, resiliency, building group cohesiveness and exercising faith.

⁵¹ Canadian Church Planting Assessment Manual (revised Feb 2006) and adopted by C2C Network. This rubric was used for Canadian planters up until 2014.

⁵² In the Assessment Centers I have participated in, these five are commonly called knockouts. They are viewed as foundational for Christian ministry in general and a candidate who is deficient in these characteristics will not be recommended for church planting.

⁵³ Typically, the assessment center is a three-day experience where planter couples are put through the hoops of role play, leadership exercises, interviews, an appointment with a therapist who probes for areas of concern, and up-front presentations.

Assessors scrutinize the candidates in the areas labelled: self-centered, contextual or relational misfit, uninspiring developer and non-strategic.

A former assessment center may have utilized Ridley's characteristics or the Canadian 15 building blocks. The revised assessment center weighs 10 dimensions and pays careful attention to stallers, which may undermine or derail successful leadership of a church plant. The objective is to discern and identify if the candidates have the right stuff to exercise point leadership in a church plant.

The right stuff for missional renewal

The discipline of contemporary church planting in North America has utilized assessment centers to discern candidate suitability for launching a new faith community. In the high-risk enterprise of church re-planting and initiating missional renewal this raises the intriguing question: what are the dimensions of a leader who is likely to spark a missional renaissance? What are the defining leadership qualities and competencies that initiate, guide and support change towards the externally focused congregation?

Leading congregational re-focusing

The issue of congregational refocusing is a daunting enterprise. The level of challenge should not be underestimated. Mann asserts that the basic congregational identity is established early in the life of a congregation, namely, the formation stage.⁵⁴ It follows that the further into the life of a congregation, the deeper into the life cycle, the more entrenched identity, ideas and ideology become, the more difficult change will prove to be, and significantly the greater the resistance to necessary change.

⁵⁴ Alice Mann, *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*, 3.

John Thomas claims foundations are forever.⁵⁵ This speaks to the daunting task that may confront the leader called to lead the way in missional revitalization. If foundations are forever, what kind of leader can jackhammer the foundations and develop a new missional enterprise?

Part of the apostolic function is laying foundations.⁵⁶ Apostolic leadership is required to infuse the church and the Church with missional vitality. This notion, of apostolic leadership is explored further in the chapter addressing biblical and theological foundations.

The apostle is the custodian of the core and founding ideas (that is, its DNA) of the ecclesia. The ministry is characterized by the following interrelated components:

Extension of Christianity as a whole onto new ground;

Developing and maintaining system wide health;

Mobilizing for movement and broad impact

Maintaining glocal (a combination of global and local) networks and relationships.⁵⁷

The leader seeking to precipitate spiritual renewal may have to negotiate a significant barrier. “Many churches skip over the issues of spiritual formation early in their lives...More often, the lack of priority given to faith development in the church’s first years will leave an indelible imprint on its personality.”⁵⁸ For example, a leader may recognize that “unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.”⁵⁹ The leader recognizes unless God leads, governs, blesses, and energizes the organizational change project; it will prove to be a futile exercise. The leader seeks God in prayer and

⁵⁵ John Thomas at Train the Trainer events in Ottawa, Ontario, June 23-25 ,2014.

⁵⁶ Ephesians 2:20.

⁵⁷ Alan Hirsch & Tim Catchum, *The Permanent Revolution* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishing, 2012), 29.

⁵⁸ Alice Mann, *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline*, 5.

⁵⁹ Psalm 127:1.

calls the core leadership and congregation to prayer. However, the invitation to corporate prayer is largely ignored. The congregation's modus operandi during its birth and formation stages was "church as human enterprise." Hard work was seen as the way to grow the congregation. Plans were made. However, diligence was not sustained by a climate of corporate prayer and intercession. The congregation and its leadership focused on fabrics, fittings, property acquisition, and mortgage pay-down, and did not attend to prayer. The issues of spiritual formation were largely ignored. Prayer was not effectively part of the congregation's DNA, and thus the leader struggles to get "prayer traction" and buy-in on the notions of waiting on God, seeking God, and praying into the life of the church and praying for the community.

The leader may discover that only grave circumstances that threaten the congregation may propel it out of its wrong-minded focus and spiritual intransigence. A congregation that perceives itself to be stable while actually in decline can only experience transformation at great cost. The challenge of congregational re-focusing requires leadership. In light of Warren Bennis's leadership typology, it is anticipated that the leaders who embark on and succeed in establishing congregational refocusing will be persons of character (integrity). The foundation of Christlikeness will enable the leader to lead with courage. In addition, the leaders will have a clear and compelling vision and a passion for Jesus and his mission.

The Quest for the Renaissance Leader

There is not a significant body of literature exploring and defining this leadership typology. There are works such as Barna's *Turnaround Churches*.⁶⁰ However, the implicit and explicit goal is numerical growth, and Barna affirms workaholism as a trait of the turnaround pastors he surveyed. This is problematic on two fronts. Firstly, numerical growth can result from simply shuffling sheep. The upturn in attendance can simply be brought about by programmatic resurgence resulting in consumerist sheep gravitating or returning to an improved show! Attendance does not address the concerns articulated by McNeal that a kingdom scorecard must be adopted that evaluates congregational engagement in mission and for example, dollars disbursed and volunteers deployed, in addressing community needs. In other words, Barna does not address the issues of renewal in mission. A church designated a "turnaround congregation" may not enjoy a missional renaissance! Secondly, a leadership typology that validates a dysfunction (workaholism) must be viewed with some suspicion.

Denominations and congregations utilize intentional interim interventionist pastors, sometimes labeled the "transitional pastor." This pastor differs from a renaissance leader. Gerry Teichrob⁶¹ sees his role as offering interim leadership with the goal of helping churches thrive through transition. This transitional leader paradigm focuses on stabilizing a flock in order to help churches welcome a new Lead Pastor from a posture of health with clarity of vision and mission.

The transitional pastor is a temporary leader who is hired from outside the congregation for an agreed period of time. While this leader is a change agent, the focus

⁶⁰ George Barna, *Turnaround Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publishing, 1993).

⁶¹ Gerry Teichrob, "Review of The Transitional Process," Pathways Blog, accessed February 1, 2016, <http://pathwaysforward.wordpress.com>.

of the change journey is not intentional missional renaissance. The renaissance leader is an incumbent leader who receives a vision from God, introduces and navigates change resulting in a missional congregation with greater external focus.

The Research Project

The focus of this research project was to identify “the right stuff” for sparking the renewal of missional imagination amongst the people of God in an established church. The project was an exploratory study of the leadership qualities of Canadian pastors who transitioned their congregations into a missional focus. The quest for the right stuff was conducted through leadership diagnostics⁶², leader self-evaluations⁶³ and qualitative interviews. The identification of common threads in the leader’s faith story and change journey; the identification of commonalities in approach to congregational change; and the investigation into leadership gifting capacity – have led to the definition of a renaissance leader.

This research project examined the ministry of the renaissance leader and offers lessons learned from pastors who embarked on an intentional journey of congregational change. Of particular interest was the experience of the leader as an agent of missional renewal.

The researcher anticipated that the effective renaissance leader would be apostolic and that apostleship will feature as a primary spiritual gift or part of the primary gift mix. The researcher assumed the renaissance leader would be an intentional change architect

⁶² A DISC test was administered along with an APEST evaluation. The latter identifies leadership gifting in light of Ephesians 4: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher.

⁶³ A leadership self-evaluation was administered. As reported in Chapter 4 this diagnostic was dropped from the project because all of the subjects did not take this test!

and that the change approach would demonstrate congruence with Kotter's change path.⁶⁴ A qualitative interview questionnaire was designed with this in mind. It was also assumed that the change leader would experience personal transformation⁶⁵ and exhibit the courage that comes from operating in the "fundamental state." With all of this in mind, the interview was shaped around questions that probed for alignment with Quinn's deep change paradigm.

A Study in Practical Theology

The researcher followed the approach of Richard Osmer.⁶⁶ He identifies four interrelated tasks: the descriptive- empirical task, the interpretive task⁶⁷, the normative task, and the pragmatic task. These tasks raise four questions that have guided the research journey.

What is going on?
Why is this going on?
What ought to be going on?
How might we respond?⁶⁸

Missiology, leadership theory, change management, and a diagnostic approach converged into a critical examination of successful ministry praxis. Congregational change projects were subjected to biblical and theological reflection. The research will inform and support congregational leaders faced with the challenges of organizational entropy and missional torpor. "Practical Theology is critical theological reflections on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to

⁶⁴ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School, 1996)

⁶⁵ Robert Quinn, *Building The Bridge as You Walk On It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).

⁶⁶ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans ,2008)

⁶⁷ The interpretive task, with its focus on leading through change, gave rise to two conceptual frameworks for understanding organizational change. These frameworks will be explored in the Literature Review where the works of John Kotter and Robert Quinn will be discussed.

⁶⁸ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans ,2008), 4.

ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world."⁶⁹

The practices of congregational leadership, evangelism, and the mobilization of the people of God to engage in Christ's mission in the world were examined as they interacted with approaches to leading through change. This examination was conducted with a view to helping faithful reflective practitioners engage in congregational renewal and faithfully pursue Jesus into the mission field. As a project in practical theology, this study involved a conversation between the practices of the world (catalytic leadership) and the practices of the church (apostolic leadership).

Theological Frameworks

The focus of this research project was the interplay of three foundational theological frameworks: mission, renewal, and leadership.⁷⁰

The renaissance leader who desires to be faithful to Jesus, his mission and his gospel and who is given oversight of a congregation in decline or slump will invariably have to confront the need for change. The renaissance leader will have to summon the courage to be a change engineer. This will involve seeking the God-who-renews for a release of kingdom life (new wine). This will also involve strategic restructuring with the concomitant need to realign and reposition people and ministries (new wineskins).⁷¹ This project explored how renewal happened amongst 15 Canadian congregations and how the issues of re-engineering, retrofitting, and restructuring was addressed. Of particular

⁶⁹John Swinton & Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 7.

⁷⁰ These Biblical and theological frameworks are expounded on, at length in chapter three.

⁷¹ Mark 2:21-22.

interest in all of this was evangelistic revitalization. The concern was not simply to track congregations where the metrics of nickels and noses or butts, bucks and buildings were resurgent. The concern was to identify the dynamics that brought about an outward focus, missional engagement, and the transformation of the lost.

In developing this project, the researcher assumed that a strategic pruning (restructuring and attrition) would likely take place. The concern was after this pruning – how is the transformational fruit of missional engagement and evangelism manifested? ⁷²

Research Methodology

A list of 15 Canadian change leaders was identified through snowball sampling or chain-referral sampling. The researcher used his associations and relationships as he crisscrossed North America in his role as a missiologist with a church-planting network.⁷³ The researcher assumed that in-depth interviews and the exegesis of change narratives would yield insights in both leadership capacity and approach that would address the quest for the “right stuff.” “Qualitative field research is just as reliable as the quantitative kind, as long as clients and readers attest to its validity.”⁷⁴

Thesis Statement

“The renaissance leader as an agent for organizational change and missional renewal: an investigation into the defining leadership qualities and approaches that initiate, guide, and support change towards the externally focused congregation.”

⁷² John 15:1ff where Jesus indicates that fruit-bearing is preceded by radical pruning.

⁷³ The research process and methodology and focus on qualitative data is examined and explained in chapter four.

⁷⁴ Patrick Lencioni cites Jim Collins in Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), xvii.

Research Questions

This research was guided by several crucial questions:

1. How does relevant literature, from both the business and church communities, understand the qualities and perspectives of renaissance leaders?
2. What biblical and theological perspectives help frame and underpin an understanding of renaissance leadership?
3. Is there a Biblical theology that invites an understanding and experience of missional renewal?
4. What are the actual practices, perspectives and characteristics of the renaissance leaders who successfully lead congregations into greater external focus?
5. How can the research learnings be applied to further renaissance leadership in churches?

If an assessment center was to be conducted to discern and deploy renaissance leaders, what would the essential dimensions for this unique ministry be? In other words, what is the “right stuff” for leading missional renewal?

CHAPTER TWO NAVIGATING CHANGE – LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

“What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”¹ Tertullian claimed these streams are mutually exclusive. However, the discipline of practical theology allows for a conversation between the practices of society (catalytic leadership) and the practices of the church (apostolic leadership) and this provides a conceptual framework for this project. Practical theology seeks the improvement of ministry praxis including leadership. Chapter Three will explore the normative task, examining the Word of God, and ensuring that ministry praxis remains faithful to the Gospel. What follows is an evaluation of thinking from Athens and Jerusalem that together offer insight into the dynamics of renaissance leadership. This chapter is an examination of the literature giving insight into these two spheres.

The change *pathways* form a conceptual framework for examining approaches to organizational change. These frameworks provided both an understanding of the change process and a means of evaluating how the fifteen leaders in this research project strategically navigated congregational renewal and recalibration. The study of the “change agent” forms an evaluative framework for examining the kind of leader best equipped by temperament, gifting, capacity, and posture for the change journey.

¹ Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* (*On the prescription of heretics*) 45, accessed July 6, 2015, http://www.tertullian.org/articles/bindley_test/bindley_test_07prae.htm.

This leader is a *pacesetter*. “Pacesetters are people who motivate an ingrown church to outreach by setting the example of a renewed leadership, people of faith who know God’s will and are willing to make every sacrifice in order to fulfill it.”²

The Road to Change

Kotter offers a change road map. He³ identifies a process which incorporates a dynamic sequence of eight steps: establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the change vision, empowering people for broad-based action, generating short-term wins, consolidating gains and producing more change and finally, anchoring new approaches in the culture.

The first step⁴ effective leaders must take is to infuse the organization with a sense of urgency in the face of decline or torpor. Kotter preaches the necessity of this in his business fable⁵ where a penguin colony must contemplate a new future because their Antarctic community is under threat. Creating a vision of a new future⁶ will only happen if the penguins grasp that the status quo is not only unsatisfactory but also untenable. The penguins faced possible extinction, yet Kotter notes, “Culture changes with as much difficulty in penguin colonies as in human colonies.”⁷

The penguin change agents’ first task was “reducing complacency and increasing urgency”⁸ and in doing so, “they had taken exactly the right first step in potentially saving

² C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 15.

³ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1996).

⁴ Kotter spells out how critical this is at length in John P. Kotter, *A Sense of Urgency*, (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2008) and John P. Kotter, *Our Iceberg Is Melting* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2005).

⁵ John P. Kotter, *Our Iceberg Is Melting* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 2005).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

the colony.”⁹ The renaissance penguins highlight the need to help people both think differently and to feel differently in order to fuel behavioural change.¹⁰

Instilling a sense of urgency involves assessing the current organizational reality and communicating why business as usual is unacceptable. “When the urgency rate isn’t high enough people don’t listen carefully to information about a new vision.”¹¹

Complacency short-circuits the change journey; establishing inertia breaking urgency is therefore critical. Kotter makes a bold claim:

By far the biggest mistake people make when trying to change organizations is to plunge ahead without establishing a high enough sense of urgency in fellow managers and employees. This error is fatal because transformations always fail to achieve their objectives when complacency levels are high. ...smart individuals...fail to create sufficient urgency at the beginning of a business transformation for many different but interrelated reasons. They overestimate how much they can force big changes on an organization. They underestimate how hard it is to drive people out of their comfort zones.¹²

People will minimize problems and downplay challenges. Businesses and churches alike display significant inbuilt resistance to change and its effects. Overcoming this involves several steps and strategic actions.

Easum proposes a nine-step change process,¹³ and indicates congregations may require steps before Kotter’s “first” step!¹⁴ He contends that the first order of business is to develop a solid community of faith with spiritual leaders. This core functions around trust, has no major ongoing conflict, and has a desire to connect with the world. This desire to connect with the world can be identified by answering the question, “do you care more about the people in the community than those in the church?” Easum counsels

⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰ Ibid., 132.

¹¹ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1996), 86.

¹² Ibid., 4-5.

¹³ Exponential Workshop, Orlando, April 24, 2013.

that the presence of ongoing conflict is a deal-breaker. He advises against proceeding at all if this is present. Easum is calling for healthy discipleship and an emotionally healthy environment as the foundation of church transformation.

In establishing a sense of urgency to fuel the change process, the leader's first responsibility is to define reality.¹⁵ Collins¹⁶ exhorts a change leader to "confront the brutal facts." Easum urges the prospective renewal agent to "Define reality before turnaround!"¹⁷

The leader must create a climate where truth telling is welcome. This can prove challenging in churches where spiritualization can provide insulation against evaluation, or where troubling data is down-played to avoid blame and accusation. Rutland remarks, "the first step in leading a turnaround in an organization is simply to take a good long look at the stark realities-and then to communicate those realities to everyone in a way that avoids panic."¹⁸

"Yes, leadership is about vision. But leadership is equally about creating a climate where the truth is heard and the brutal facts confronted. There's a huge difference between the opportunity to "have your say" and to be heard. The good-to-great leaders understood this distinction, creating culture wherein people had a tremendous opportunity to be heard, and ultimately, for the truth to be heard."¹⁹

Admiral James Stockdale was an American prisoner-of-war during the Vietnam War. Deprived of his rights and with no release date in sight, Stockdale spent eight dark

¹⁵ Max Du Pree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 11.

¹⁶ Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins Publishing, 2001), 65-89.

¹⁷ Bill Easum, seminar on congregational revitalization at Exponential 2013, Orlando Florida, April 22-25

¹⁸ Mark Rutland, *Relaunch –how to stage an organizational comeback* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013), 73.

¹⁹ Collins, *Good To Great*, 74.

years in extreme conditions. He maintained an unwavering faith that he would prevail and claims the ones who did not survive were the optimists.²⁰

Collins cast the veteran's wisdom into the Stockdale Paradox²¹ where the leader must hold together, in dynamic tension, two principles that seem to be mutually exclusive. These seemingly irreconcilable truths form a "signature of all who create greatness be it in leading their own lives or in leading others."²²

The renaissance leader will embrace this mindset: "Retain faith that you will prevail, in the end, regardless of the difficulties. And at the same time, confront the most brutal facts of your own reality whatever they might be."²³ Thus, the renaissance leader must exhibit faith that the God who raises the dead can infuse an ailing or dead or dysfunctional church with new life and missional potency. At the same time, he will not hide from the challenges and obstacles on the change pathway. Before getting out of the starting blocks, the leader will have a clear-eyed assessment of the current state of the organization.

A Kotter disciple will recognize that culture change eludes Lone Rangers. The point leader will need to solicit and secure the support of key stakeholders. In addition, the leader will need to assemble a dream team to support the organizational changes that will transform a dormant faith community into a congregation on mission. The guiding coalition is selected on the basis of their credibility, expertise, position, and influence. The team members may or may not appear on the published organizational chart, but they

²⁰ Collins, *Good To Great*, 85.

²¹ Ibid., 83.

²² Ibid., 86.

²³ Ibid., 86.

carry the currency of personal influence.²⁴ Much wisdom is required in assembling this team.²⁵ The team members should have credibility and influence based on spiritual and emotional maturity. This team needs to pursue what is best for the health of the congregation, and not be derailed by or mired in the political consequences of necessary change. Christ-like people are required for this role because, together, this group can collectively overcome the inevitable resistance and opposition that the organizational change will provoke.

Deep Change is Needed

Quinn negates an incremental approach to organizational change and advocates “deep change.” Quinn’s approach is a necessary remedy to the proclivity already noted towards entropy, decline, and slow death. Here, Hunter’s game plan for infusing a congregation with fresh missional vitality is called into question. He proposes a way to “manage” a church turnaround.²⁶ He claims “the way out of stagnation and the way forward for your church could be the “Breakthrough Project Strategy.”²⁷

This is a new program implemented in a prescribed (short) period of time. He claims, “stagnant and declining churches often define themselves in terms of the church’s activities.”²⁸ The way forward to invigorate the church that defines itself in terms of the activities it generates, is to shift it from this self-definition and the notion that a busy church is a successful church. He claims stagnant churches may have a good idea but

²⁴ In a local church they may carry weight on the basis of longevity, ministry impact, giving capacity, or bloodlines!

²⁵ James 1:5-6.

²⁶ George G. Hunter III, *Leading & Managing A Growing Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 110.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

rarely implement effectively. Hunter proposes the remedy for this ecclesial dysfunction is a project that summons the convergence of energy and people power in a concerted effort. This will lead to a simplification of church life. This is a concession to congregational insecurity because “many churches...are not self-confident enough to risk a diagnosis, or confident enough of the future to devote a season to strategic planning.”²⁹

Hunter’s thesis, drawing on Schaffer,³⁰ is that a short term project and the enthusiasm that its success may generate will create a new and better day for the congregation carried along by a new spirit of collaboration and sense of achievement. The congregation will be moved towards “higher performance.”³¹ However, it is likely that such enthusiasm will prove short-lived and not catalyze a congregation towards new and deeper missional engagement. Hunter’s proposal is built in large measure on the precarious idea that addressing weaknesses or diagnostic activities should be avoided. The reason? These actions “only depresses the organization and arouses and intensifies the very forces (“restraining forces”) stacked against the changes the organization needs.”³²

This runs counter to Stockdale’s wisdom and the call to “confront the brutal facts” and Kotter’s foundational discipline of cultivating genuine urgency as the path to organizational change. The breakthrough project can then be a fatal distraction that allows for glossing over systemic issues and dysfunctions that need courageously addressed. Furthermore, Hunter’s programmatic, short-term project falls short of the goal of congregational transformation, *the creation of a new culture*. As Cordeiro points out,

²⁹ Hunter, *Leading and Managing a Growing Church*, 119.

³⁰ Robert Schaffer, *The Breakthrough Strategy: Using Short Term Successes to Build The High Performance Organization* (San Francisco: Harper Row, 1988).

³¹ Hunter, *Leading and Managing a Growing Church*, 120-121.

³² *Ibid.*, 120.

this requires changing the congregational default. The renaissance leader must identify the current congregational default setting, and with considerable effort change the default. Scrapping tired programs, tinkering with existing programs or developing the special project will all fail to produce a new culture of missional engagement if the default setting is not addressed.³³

Hunter's project based remedy for church malaise ignores a fundamental issue. For church culture to be transformed, the current congregational culture needs to be identified and assessed. The prevalent actual values, beliefs, behaviors, and theology of a congregation become an operating system. Many congregations need more than an "app" to be introduced — they need a brand new operating system. Deep change is required for a new day of missional engagement.

The path to deep change leading to missional renewal may involve the point leader following in the footprints of Vincent Donovan, and then in turn, bringing the congregation on a journey in those footprints.

Donovan is a paradigmatic missional change agent. His ministry was among the Masai, but has North American ministry implications.³⁴ He inherited the classic missionary institutional expectations – running medical and educational programs on the compound. With a keen eye he noted that students "graduated" from Christianity when they graduated from the church run school. He also observed that the only time the locals initiated contact with the mission was when they had medical needs or a medical emergency.

³³ Robert Lewis & Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: transforming your church from the inside out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 53.

³⁴ Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2003), vii.

He left the security and provider-client ethos of the mission compound and met Masai on their territory, on their terms.³⁵ He went “naked,” “to plant the seed of the gospel in Masai culture and let it grow wild.”³⁶

His missional self-description has congruence with Quinn’s call to walk naked (and therefore unprotected and vulnerable) into the land of uncertainty. Donovan attempted to shed the imperialistic paternalism of the mission. He did not embrace mission as pedagogy, but as dialogue.³⁷ “Evangelization is a process of bringing the gospel to people where they are, not where you would like them to be.”³⁸ Donovan’s humble posture, which embraces mutuality in mission, contrasts the posture of a provider-client ethos.

He disavowed the “Teacher Complex”³⁹ of the mission compound that claims we have all the answers – come to us. The pedagogical posture and the provider posture fail to recognize that break-through is God’s prerogative and fails to recognize God is already at work amongst people prior to and independent of the gospel worker’s involvement. Donovan’s story is a reminder that God is already at work in the world, in a community, in a culture or amongst a tribe and invites us to see where He is working and join Him. In addition, Donovan points intriguingly to the possibility that missional renewal may not spring forth from tinkering with the machinery or creating a breakthrough project. Missional renaissance may flow from life beyond and outside of the compound!

³⁵ Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, vii.

³⁹ K Koyama, “Christianity Suffers from Teacher Complex” in *Mission Trends No. 2: Evangelization*, ed. G.H. Anderson G.H. and T.F. Stransky (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 70-75.

Quinn asserts that in order to be a change agent within an organization, the leader must experience personal transformation. Quinn is, in effect, a challenging exposition of Gandhi's axiom, "be the change you want to see in the world." Therefore, the church leadership core must embody the values being espoused. It is anticipated, therefore, that the point leader will experience profound change and be able to articulate how God was at work in their journey of personal transformation, as they attempted to architect organizational change.

The particular focus on congregational change in this research project is missional renewal. How will a point leader embarking on a church transformation project be impacted in the process? What does the leader discover? It is anticipated that if a leader desires to precipitate a movement towards external focus, the leader himself must embody the external impulse. A leader will be unable to create and cultivate a missional culture in a congregation unless there is demonstrable missional engagement.

Quinn invites the reader to view the organization as a system and identifies the way for organizational change. He describes a leader who "modeled what he wanted the system to do."⁴⁰ Thus, for Quinn, the leader cannot be like the double-minded man.⁴¹ The effective, transformational leader makes *fundamental choices*. "Fundamental choices are not subject to changes in internal or external circumstances."⁴² The leader must be proactive, not reactive, and the leaders must be adaptive and supple, but also anchored. He describes one leader as, "externally open, purpose-centered, other-focused, and internally directed."⁴³

⁴⁰ Robert Quinn, *Building The Bridge as You Walk On It* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2004), 124.

⁴¹ James 1: 2-8.

⁴² Robert Quinn, *Building The Bridge As You Walk On It*, 117.

⁴³ Ibid., 124.

Quinn offers particular challenges to Christian leaders. He advocates travelling naked into the land of uncertainty. He maintains this “allows for another kind of learning, a learning that helps us forget what we know and discover what we need.” This requires a spiritual leader to live surrendered to Jesus⁴⁴ and his mission and to lead with openness and vulnerability and to lead without having all the answers. Implicit in “travelling naked into the land of uncertainty” is risk and vulnerability.

Quinn asserts that any organization must choose between deep change and slow death. This is congruent with Jesus’ challenges to the seven Asian churches.⁴⁵ The church is not immune to slow death. Jesus Himself presents the solemn possibility of congregational life and ministry coming to an end. When he addresses the church in Ephesus, a church characterized by a loss of “first love,”⁴⁶ Jesus’ solemn warning and promise is: “Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.”⁴⁷ The church will in fact inevitably succumb to such a fate if there is not a bold commitment to spiritual renewal and openness to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Quinn preaches the necessity of organic organizations and these are characterized as responsive. The organic organization “acts quickly in a coordinated way and can adjust and learn and grow.” This requires the leader to be organic. “Only organic individuals can lead an organic organization.”⁴⁸ The transformational change agent must enter the fundamental state of leadership.

⁴⁴ Romans 12:1-2.

⁴⁵ Revelation 2 & 3.

⁴⁶ Revelation 2:4.

⁴⁷ Revelation 2:5.

⁴⁸ Robert Quinn, *Deep Change* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1996), 6.

Leading Change is not for the Faint of Heart

Change is daunting. Church change journeys should come with a spiritual health warning. In *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy, Bilbo Baggins advises his nephew leaving the familiar Shire and heading into uncharted and hostile territory, “It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door. You step into the Road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to.”⁴⁹

Organizational change is demanding and dangerous. The change leader, like a vulnerable Hobbit, imbued with a sense of mission, has to negotiate unfamiliar, inhospitable and even perilous territory. Frodo is a tiny figure with a huge task, he must dispose of the ring of power. The leader embarking on the huge task of calling and influencing a congregation towards transformation and missional engagement will encounter setbacks, challenges, and resistance.

Rendle speaks of displacement, disorientation and turbulence when he claims that that the soul leading the congregation on change will step into the wilderness⁵⁰ and ride a roller coaster.⁵¹

Schaller warns: “Anyone seriously interested in planned social change would be well advised to recognize two facts of life. First, despite the claims of many, relatively little is known about how to achieve predictable change. Second, much of what is known will not work.”⁵²

⁴⁹ JRR Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings Part One: The Fellowship of the Ring* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994), 82.

⁵⁰ Gilbert R. Rendle, *Leading Change in the Congregation* (Durham, NC: Alban Institute, 1998), 77-96.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 105-115.

⁵² Lyle E. Schaller, *The Change Agent* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 11.

In Schaller's first foray in change literature, he conveys the level of risk attached to congregational change. He explores "How to Cut Your Own Throat."⁵³ He recounts change journey casualties. Having expounded on a failed church renewal project, he concludes, "In this congregation, three progressive, change-oriented Christian leaders were forced to resign as *they became victims, rather than facilitators of the change process.*"⁵⁴

Easum offers a sobering statistic on the enormity of revitalization when he claims, "around 75% of turnarounds fail and the pastor attempting it is fired."⁵⁵ He then asks two probing questions:

1. "Is it God's will?"
2. "Are you willing to stay the course even if you lose your job?"

He warns: "Turnaround is hard, messy business. So hard that most pastors who try will lose their jobs because they try to do it in their own strength."⁵⁶

Quinn opines: "We uncover a great paradoxical truth. Change is hell. Yet not to change, to stay on the path of slow death, is also hell. The difference is that the hell of deep change is the hero's journey. The journey puts us on a path of exhilaration, growth and progress."⁵⁷

Quinn, like Frost, claims that the change leader must stand at a fork on the road. For Frost the traveler must decide whether to tread the well-worn path or embark on the "road

⁵³ Schaller, *The Change Agent*, 17- 32.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 21 (italics mine).

⁵⁵ Bill Easum speaking at Exponential, April 2013 in Orlando.

⁵⁶ Bill Easum, *The Second Resurrection*, 57.

⁵⁷ Robert Quinn, *Deep Change* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1996), 77.

less travelled.”⁵⁸ Quinn offers a binary vision with steeper and starker alternatives – slow death or a life-giving journey through hell!

The leader pursuing missional renewal embarks on an odyssey. He may not have to navigate past the calls of seductive sirens or deal with Cyclops and the lotus-eaters but will face distraction and danger. The renaissance leader may not achieve exploits like Homer’s Odysseus, but will face difficulty that will require spiritual courage.⁵⁹ The road to “missional” requires vulnerability and brokenness. Jesus deployed the 72 on mission as dependent and vulnerable agents of the kingdom.⁶⁰

Jesus indicated that renewal is not only necessary and life giving; but can be explosive! The change leader needs to be strategic and judicious in facilitating and accommodating change and be mindful that new ways and new wine are not well served by old structures. The leader needs wisdom to avoid exploding wineskins and detonating land mines on the change journey.⁶¹

The renaissance leader faces the prospect of being in harm’s way. Easum has indicated the renewal pathway does not offer job security. Rutland writes of “the hard, dangerous work of turnaround leadership.”⁶²

Leading Change: Dealing with Decline and Slow Death

The renaissance leader knows the Second Law of Thermodynamics has spiritual and ecclesial application. The change agent must also address the unsettling question why

⁵⁸ Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*, accessed March 2, 2016, <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/road-not-taken>.

⁵⁹ I am indebted to Richard Rohr for the Odysseus metaphor see Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2011).

⁶⁰ Luke 10:3 where the 72 are deployed as lambs among wolves.

⁶¹ Mark 2:21-22.

⁶² Mark Rutland, *Relaunch – How to Stage an Organizational Comeback* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2013), 12.

do churches die? Like a skilled physician, or forensic scientist, the leader tasked with missional transformation must be able to identify the causes of decline and slow death to apply the appropriate remedy.

A congregation can launch enthusiastically with dreams of kingdom advancement. That same congregation, even having enjoyed a season of fruitful and transformational ministry can lose its gospel optimism, lose sight of the founding vision and mission, experience a gradual decline, and a slow death. Or, it may experience a traumatic event, which precipitates a tragic decline and cease to exist. There are several reasons why a church may die.

Congregations die because they lose sight of God's mission. "As appears from Christ's call, mission is not merely one among the many aspects of the church; it belongs to the very core of her being. Therefore, Hendrik Kraemer's penetrating comment, "A church without a mission is a galvanized corpse," is, certainly in full accord with the Gospel and Acts."⁶³

Congregations also die because they lose sight of the LORD of the church. This may happen incrementally as "mission drift."⁶⁴ Incremental drift is particularly perilous because it may escape the notice of leadership and laity alike and therefore the shift in organizational health and vibrancy will not arouse the appropriate urgency to arouse necessary change.

Congregations die because they lose sight of the beauty, power and truth of the gospel.

Most of our problems in life come from a lack of proper orientation to the gospel. Pathologies in the church and sinful patterns in our individual lives ultimately stem from a failure to think through the deep implications of the gospel and to

⁶³ Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 112-113.

⁶⁴ Peter Greer, and Chris Horst Chris, *Mission Drift* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2014).

grasp and believe the gospel through and through. Put positively, the gospel transforms our hearts and our thinking and changes our approaches to absolutely everything.⁶⁵

“Mission True organizations believe the Gospel is their most precious asset.”⁶⁶ If a congregation moves away from this core conviction it is headed for decline and demise. Christian congregations are “entrusted with the gospel.”⁶⁷ The gospel is not merely a message to be believed, declared, and expounded; it is “the power of God.”⁶⁸

When a Christ follower or a congregation loses a love of the gospel, and there is no longer appreciation for the freshness of the gospel, decline is inevitable. If a congregation loses a “proper confidence” in the gospel, then missional impotency and spiritual death will ensue. Newbigin asserted the “absolute supremacy of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹ He argued, “It is an illusion to suppose that we can find something more absolute than what God has done in Jesus Christ.”⁷⁰ Losing sight of this will lead to terminal decline.

The apostles had fierce confidence in the power of the gospel and the uniqueness, supremacy and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, evidenced by their clear Christocentric preaching.⁷¹ With confidence and bold humility, the Early Church declared salvation, energized by their startling vision of the uniqueness of Jesus. It is clear that the early

⁶⁵ Timothy Keller, *Center Church - Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2012), 51.

⁶⁶ Peter Greer and Chris Horst, *Mission Drift*, 33.

⁶⁷ 1 Thessalonians 2:4.

⁶⁸ Romans 1:16.

⁶⁹ Lesslie Newbigin, “The Enduring Validity of Cross Cultural Missions,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 12, no. 2 (April 1988): 52.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷¹ See, for example, Peter’s unequivocal declaration in Acts 4:12.

Jesus movement was captivated by the supremacy of Jesus. They even rejoiced when their gospel proclamation resulted in prison and mistreatment.⁷²

Even with apostolic confidence in the gospel, the primitive Jesus movement ran the risk of losing sight of its Founder and moving off-gospel. The Hebrew believers are exhorted to focus on Jesus.⁷³ They are challenged to a re-engagement with Jesus.⁷⁴

Timothy is told: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”⁷⁵ “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”⁷⁶ Vigilance and diligence is required to ensure the gospel is faithfully stewarded and discharged. Paul reminded the Corinthians that the gospel he proclaimed was of “first importance”⁷⁷ He rebuked the Galatians for losing sight of the centrality and power of the gospel, lamenting that they were “bewitched.”⁷⁸ Paul’s communications to fledgling flocks often involve calling them back to the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus⁷⁹ or addressing the undermining of the gospel of grace.⁸⁰

Contemporary congregations run the risk, just as their ancient counterparts did, of losing confidence in the power of the gospel or veering away from the centrality of the gospel. For “there is nothing new under the sun.”⁸¹ A church that imbibes its contextual relativism or pluralism will lack Christological clarity and conviction. A church that lacks confidence in its Founder and the message that He is strong and might to save and

⁷² This was deemed a great privilege by the early Jesus movement – see Acts 5:41.

⁷³ Hebrews 3:1.

⁷⁴ Hebrews 12:1-3, italics mine.

⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 4:16.

⁷⁶ 2 Timothy 1:14.

⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

⁷⁸ Galatians 3:1-5.

⁷⁹ Colossians.

⁸⁰ Galatians.

⁸¹ Ecclesiastes 1:9.

transform will wither and eventually die. This death through losing confidence in the gospel may take place even as the corpse continues to engage in social and religious activity.

Further Autopsy Considered

Rainer diagnoses the causes of congregational decline and death.⁸² He laments that “a church that dies because she no longer had a vision.”⁸³ He claims a congregation without a compelling vision is doomed. In language parallel to Quinn’s “slow death,” Rainer traces “slow erosion”⁸⁴ as the most common dynamic that results in death. Slow erosion is particularly challenging, and is the worst form of decline because of its gradualism. It happens largely or wholly unnoticed and continues because “the members have no sense of urgency to change.”⁸⁵ Kotter is unequivocal that the first order of business in a change project is to “establish a sense of urgency.”⁸⁶ A church that is not alert and even agitated about its decline will die as a consequence of its complacency. “This error is fatal because transformations always fail to achieve their objectives when complacency levels are high.”⁸⁷

Rainer is not alone in a diagnosis of death-by-no-vision. Malphurs and Penfold⁸⁸ identify loss of vision as the cause of decline and death. They claim the revolving door with its parade of short-tenured lead pastors is a significant contributing factor to this

⁸² Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2014).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁶ John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1996) and John Kotter, *A Sense of Urgency* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2008).

⁸⁷ John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1996), 4.

⁸⁸ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 13.

decline. “When churches experience lots of turnover in their pastors and personnel, vision is one of the first things to be lost.”⁸⁹ These leadership transitions destabilize congregations and undermine effective leadership. In contrast, Rainer cites longevity as a significant contributing factor to leadership effectiveness and church health.⁹⁰

Rainer⁹¹ writes,

The leaders we studied are willing and even want to have long-term ministries at one church. While longer tenure itself is not the key to effective leadership, a series of short-term pastorates rarely allows one time to establish lasting leadership in a church. In one of our national surveys of pastors, we found the average pastoral tenure to be 3.6 years. But in different studies of effective leaders, those pastors had an average tenure ranging from 11.2 to 21.6 years.⁹²

Thus, a dearth of vision and short stay leadership are concomitant contributors to decline and decay.

This complacency and ignorance of the need for change can be fueled by spiritual nostalgia. Rainer notes, “The most pervasive and common thread of our autopsies was that the deceased churches lived for a long time with the past as a hero.”⁹³ This creates a collective insulation against the need for deep change and congregational renewal. The veneration of the past can become an idolatry that thwarts the pursuit of God and his mission in the here and now.

Rainer also diagnoses that dead churches lose sight of the needs of their communities. They do not follow Jesus’ other-centered gaze and exhortation to look outwards.⁹⁴ Rainer’s post mortem is “they looked inwardly instead of outwardly.”⁹⁵ The

⁸⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁰ Thom Rainer, “8 Traits of Effective Church Leaders,” *The Thom Rainer Blog*, June 11, 2009, accessed March 10, 2015, http://thomrainer.com/2009/06/8_traits_of_effective_church_leaders/.

⁹¹ He identifies eight traits that contribute to effective congregational leadership. Of interest here is “longevity.”

⁹² http://thomrainer.com/2009/06/8_traits_of_effective_church_leaders/

⁹³ Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 18.

⁹⁴ John 4:35.

inward congregational focus is manifested in self-preservation⁹⁶ with resources being spent and deployed inwardly. This is the path to congregational death. Spiritual selfishness and personal preferences take precedence over missional engagement,⁹⁷ and characterize the congregation heading for death. An inward focus will invariably lead to decline and death. Churches that become self-absorbed and fixated on the internal machinery of the congregation and focused on the needs of their own constituents will not only fail to exercise redemptive influence they have signed their own death warrant.

An inward focus results in missional impotency and paralysis. Nelson asserts, “Unless the needs of your communicant members is secondary to the needs of your community- you will never reach that community for Christ.”⁹⁸ The plight of the congregation that will not make member needs subservient to community needs is not only one of missional disengagement but an inevitable trajectory towards a spiritual demise. This death and decline results from disobedience to the resurrected Lord Jesus. “Thriving churches have the Great Commission as the centerpiece of their vision, while dying churches have forgotten the clear command of Christ.”⁹⁹

Additionally, Rainer cites prayerlessness¹⁰⁰ and lack of clear purpose¹⁰¹ as further causes of death. Here he identifies two significant spiritual hazards. The congregation that does not pray, may have fallen prey to the routinization of charisma. Here the emphasis has become technique over spiritual dynamics. The workers become

⁹⁵ Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 22.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁹⁸ My friend Dr. Gary Nelson, President of Tyndale University, declared this – which is an unidentifiable quote from the late Robert Schuller in a lively personal conversation about missional engagement on October 21, 2010 in Cape Town, SA when we were attending Lausanne III.

⁹⁹ Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 40.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 63-69.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 71.

technicians utilizing time-tested methodologies rather than operating out of the unpredictable dynamic of the Holy Spirit. Innovation will be suffocated and missional imagination will shrivel up like a neglected houseplant. A prayerless congregation exhibits a collective functional atheism. The church that does not pray ignores Jesus' declaration and invitation. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."¹⁰² A congregation that does not pray short-circuits the renewing possibilities of hearing the life-giving whisper and directive¹⁰³ voice of the Holy Spirit and the renewing presence of God.

The purposelessness of an ailing, failing congregation is in stark contrast to a mission true organization, that has fierce clarity regarding its *raison d'être*. A mission-true organization can answer with clarity and conviction the *why of its existence*. A church on the path to death has lost sight of its reason for existence and has no compelling response to the simple question, "Why do you exist?" A church is on the road to irrelevance and ultimately death when it cannot answer: "what's your business?" and "how's business?"¹⁰⁴

"In its simplest form, Mission True organizations know why they exist and protect their core at all costs. They remain faithful to what they believe God has entrusted them to do. They define what is immutable: their values and purposes, their DNA, their heart and soul."¹⁰⁵

An organization that does not have a clear overarching purpose with clear vision and strategy in which ministries and resources are aligned will dissipate its energy and

¹⁰² John 15:5.

¹⁰³ Romans 8:14.

¹⁰⁴ Peter Drucker was fond of posing these questions to organizations; which are equally relevant for businesses and ministries.

¹⁰⁵ Greer & Horst, *Mission Drift*, 27.

find itself in trouble. Schaller bemoans the “galvanized corpses” that do not have a central organizing principle for why they exist and therefore tend to have a diffusion of purposes.¹⁰⁶ Diffused churches are unlikely to invest the collective energy in reaching and assimilating new people. Leaders will build silos and engage in protectionism to preserve their positions, interest, or departments. Organizational life may become characterized by competition, conflict, and vying for resources.¹⁰⁷

The internal life of a congregation typified by turf wars and silos is not only problematic regarding the distribution of resources and dissipation of energy. It is spiritually problematic. “When the church faces out toward the world it knows that it only exists as the first-fruits and the instrument of the reconciling work of Christ and that division within its own life is a violent contradiction of its own nature.”¹⁰⁸

Schaller claimed that churches decline and die because they do not know what day it is. He would frequently ask what day is it? This question raises concerns about aging and obsolescence. “Every institution is tempted to seek to do yesterday over again.”¹⁰⁹ Schaller concludes that there is no reason to expect what proved effective with a constituency in a previous generation or bygone era should prove effective or fruitful with an entirely different constituency several years later.¹¹⁰

Congregations that do not know what day it is, cannot exercise the ministry of the men of Issachar, “who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.”¹¹¹ They succumb to an ecclesial “Land That Time Forgot,”¹¹² decline and experience slow death.

¹⁰⁶ Schaller, *The Interventionist* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 133.

¹⁰⁷ See Patrick Lencioni, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

¹⁰⁸ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1954), 9.

¹⁰⁹ Lyle Schaller, *The Interventionist*, 41.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹¹¹ 1 Chronicles 12:32.

Congregations must be attentive to an adaptive challenge. Organizations without agility and awareness to adapt to a changing context, market, or technologies will not survive. This is illustrated by the demise of Blockbuster¹¹³ whose lack of organizational agility proved lethal.¹¹⁴

The congregation maintaining attractional business as usual faces disappointment and diminishing influence. The segment of the population predisposed to attending a weekend worship gathering is shrinking, particularly amongst the emerging generations.¹¹⁵ This trend will continue as McNeal remarks, “Disinterest in institutional Christianity will accelerate.”¹¹⁶

A congregation that is not cognizant of “the day it is in” will struggle, decline and fail to engage its context fruitfully with gospel.

Reynolds¹¹⁷ supports Schaller’s diagnosis regarding congregational disconnect from the contemporary milieu creating decline and death.¹¹⁸ Reynolds also claims

¹¹² Tarzan author Edgar Rice Burroughs’ fantasy novel was adapted into the titular movie in 1975. (See http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073260/?ref_=ttpl_pl_tt). A German U-Boat sinks a British ship. The U-Boat takes the survivors onboard. Due to a nautical miscalculation the seafarers end up in a mysterious land populated by dinosaurs and Neanderthals. In the same way congregations that do not know what day they are in perpetuate extinct ministries in an encapsulated ecosystem.

¹¹³ “Blockbuster Video had 9,000 stores and 60,000 employees and \$5.9 billion in revenues at their peak in 2004. Then the installation of cable modems made streaming video possible. Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy protection on September 23, 2010. Technology is a freight train that doesn’t care who is standing on its tracks.”

Roy H. Williams, “Do You Hear That Train Acomin?”, The Monday Morning Memo Blog, January 18, 2016, accessed January 18, 2016 <http://www.mondaymorningmemo.com/newsletters/do-you-hear-that-train-acomin/>.

¹¹⁴ “Blockbuster turned down the opportunity to acquire a little DVD-mailing company called Netflix for just \$50 million in 2000, when that price represented Blockbuster’s revenue for just 3 days. Netflix market value now stands at \$32.9 billion; a number that exceeds the value of the CBS network. Comcast chose not to buy Disney. Yahoo turned down the opportunity to buy Google. Yahoo and Friendster both turned down the opportunity to buy Facebook. But rather than shake my head and laugh, I ask, “Will anyone be laughing at me tomorrow? What opportunities am I missing?” Roy H. Williams, *Ibid*

¹¹⁵ Michael Frost, *The Road to Missional* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 18-19.

¹¹⁶ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009), 179.

¹¹⁷ Reynolds serves as Vice President of Redeemer’s City-to-City. He brings oversight to church planter training, assessment and coaching for the City-to-City Network. From his vantage point he not only has a perspective on church planting across various denominations, but also church renewal and revitalization.

declining churches make poor leadership choices regarding the selection of lead pastor. They then fail to attract and retain a qualified and competent leader. He claims, “after one or two underwhelming leaders the church declines.”¹¹⁹

Willard claims “soul ruin” causes congregational atrophy.¹²⁰ This is a refusal to identify and deal with sin and apply the power of the gospel that results not only in a toxic congregational culture, but a culture of death. He describes a church that launched out of unresolved conflict in another congregation. The founding pastor of this “plant-split” was dismissed after four years due to adultery and financial impropriety. His successor resigned after four years due to stress. “A third pastor came and enjoyed popularity. Again, the church grew. After a while he started giving himself salary raises, which the congregation did not knowingly approve. After ten years he left, started another church within ten miles of his former church and took three hundred members with him.”¹²¹

Pastor Four, who initially presided over a peaceful season, had a sexual affair. He eventually disclosed this to the board and staff, expecting them to cover up his illicit behavior. “In the midst of much lying and discord in the board and staff, the church seemed to go on as before.”¹²² About a year later this pastor moved in response to a “call” from a larger church in another community, leaving turmoil, strife and division in his wake.

Willard’s review of a 36-year span points to the possibility of sinful and destructive patterns becoming part of congregational culture. His brief church history

¹¹⁸ Personal conversation with Mark Reynolds at C2C Summit in Toronto November 10, 2015.

¹¹⁹ Mark Reynolds, email message, November 16, 2015.

¹²⁰ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 2002), 47-48.

¹²¹ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 47.

¹²² Ibid., 47.

lesson is unconfessed sin, sin cover-ups, deception and divisiveness became part of this church's life.

“The story is... illustrative of the extent to which sin, in a form everyone plainly recognizes as such, undermines even the efforts of Christ's own people to be *His* people. That is its power. Although the degree and details differ, the story of this church is – in spite of some very fine exceptions – all too common.”¹²³

Willard comments that in each episode cited the common default was to deny, suppress, or minimize sin. He claims the pastoral confessions were at best half-truths and things were covered up so that the show could go on.¹²⁴ Willard identifies a sobering dimension to the quest for missional renewal. Many congregations need more than fresh vision, a new strategy, and alignment of resources with missional engagement or a people development pathway. Many congregations will need to own and confess and repent of individual and collective sin in a spirit of humility before embarking on a fruitful missional trajectory. Here the need for fresh missional imagination is superseded by the need to repent and be broken before the LORD.

In the scenario above trust was broken. Willard indicates that while the church leadership conspired to conceal the pastor's sexual immorality, the affair was widely acknowledged in the community at large. A deep breach of trust may prove irreparable and signal an irreversible decline down the slopes of slow death.

The Psalmist bemoaned the detrimental effect of unconfessed sin¹²⁵ The Psalmist bears witness to the life-sapping dynamic of sin that is not confronted and dealt with in

¹²³ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 47.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 48.

¹²⁵ Psalm 32:3-4.

stark contrast to the joy of forgiveness he revels in elsewhere.¹²⁶ It follows that while this is true of an individual – the same spiritual atrophy can fuel the decline and death of a congregation.

Leading Change: in Search of Answers

If church transformation is daunting, difficult, and dangerous – what wisdom might guide the journey ahead? Is there wisdom to light the path of the prospective change agent and wisdom to highlight what kind of leader is best suited for the heavy lifting of organizational change?

What are the approaches and disciplines that make organizational change and therefore congregational change possible and even successful? Are there change road maps or pathways that will prove effective? What kind of leader might be predisposed to pulling off an organizational change and a congregational shift towards increased missional engagement? What are the leadership dimensions that support the change project?

The Challenge of Change

“Faithful congregations follow Jesus into the mission field to make disciples who make a difference in the world.”¹²⁷ How can a leader, commissioned with oversight of an inward focused flock, exercise the influence necessary to pull this off? If indeed, the

¹²⁶ Psalm 32:1-2; Psalm 32:5.

¹²⁷ Bill Easum, *Unfreezing Moves* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 9.

“basic purpose of Christianity is to be with Jesus on the mission field,”¹²⁸ what then are the leadership capacities, rhythms, and approaches that will foster missional engagement?

A congregational leader wanting to follow Jesus on mission and to call and lead the way for the congregation to live on mission with and for Jesus will embark on whitewater rafting. The pastor will have to address and disrupt the status quo, and navigate the currents of change. Easum argues that the majority of churches are unhealthy and often populated by dysfunctional and mean-spirited people. “There are more dysfunctional churches in the U.S. than there are healthy churches. And the smaller the church is the more likely it is more dysfunctional.”¹²⁹ If this diagnosis is accurate the road to mission will be paved with necessary change.

Hirsch claims the church is facing an adaptive challenge. “The conditions facing us in the twenty-first century not only pose a threat to our existence but also present us with an extraordinary opportunity to discover ourselves in a way that orients us to this complex challenge in ways that are resonant with an ancient energy.”¹³⁰

An adaptive challenge can come from two possible sources. It can come from a situation of significant threat or a situation of compelling opportunity, or both.¹³¹ Hirsch argues that it is both. The Canadian Church faces both a day of danger threatening its continued existence and a day of opportunity:

For the church, both forms of adaptive challenge present very real issues for us in our day. Threat to the existence of the institutional church comes in the form of *rapid discontinuous change*, and compelling opportunity comes in the form of a massive, almost unprecedented *openness to issues of God, spirituality, community, and meaning*. Both are good reasons to change.¹³²

¹²⁸ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁹ Bill Easum, “Why Are So Many Churches Mean Spirited?”, accessed March 15, 2015 <http://effectivechurch.com/why-are-so-many-churches-mean-spirited/>. He claims 60% of all churches are in this category.

¹³⁰ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 17.

¹³¹ Ibid., 247.

¹³² Ibid., 247.

The leader will need to be a diagnostician, a disturber, and a catalyst for a new culture if such congregations are to flourish and bear fruit. The leader who inherits the helm of a plateaued or declined faith community¹³³ will also have to call for and create a climate of change.

Helland and Hjalmarson claim that plateaued churches are stagnant because of a collective inability to navigate change and also because of contextual disengagement. Eighty-percent “of churches in North America have plateaued or are in decline because most of them don’t know how to handle change or engage their culture.”¹³⁴ Thus, the challenge before the pastor is to lead in a change inept or change-averse environment and to lead the flock inside out to joining God in his mission. The renaissance leader not only faces the task of overcoming stagnation and internal inertia. He not only needs to respond to the adaptive challenge Hirsch expounds. The leader acting as a missional catalyst must also contend with consumerism. A decisive shift from the dominant provider-client approach of doing church will not come readily from an incremental weaning off of the provision of religious goods and services. Consumerism is a pervasive challenge – it is “a *set of presuppositions most of us have been formed to carry without question or critique. More than merely an economic system, it is the framework through which we understand everything including the gospel, the church, and God himself.*”¹³⁵

¹³³ As cited in Chapter 1, 80-85% of North American churches have plateaued or are in decline. The sobering fact is to escape this categorization a church need only add one new constituent!

¹³⁴ Roger Helland and Len Hjalmarson, *Missional Spirituality*, (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2011), 17.

¹³⁵ Skye Jethani, *The Divine Commodity: Discovering a Faith Beyond Consumer Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 12.

Peterson laments that spiritual formation and making disciples can be subsumed into consumerism. This illustrates the need for an organizational shift that will create radical discontinuity from the past practice of gathering consumers who will absorb programs and religious goods and services; and calls for deep change. “Anything formulaic or technological contributes to a consumer approach to the spiritual life, and we must be on guard against it. So easily “spirituality” becomes a cafeteria through which we walk making selections according to our taste or appetite.”¹³⁶

Voices of Change

Hirsch believes the way forward is for the church to recapture “latent inbuilt missional potencies” and that “there are primal forces that lie latent in every Jesus community and in every true believer.”¹³⁷ He calls for a recalibration around the gospel, awakening the dormant potential and unleashing “Apostolic Genius.”¹³⁸ He offers an exposition of the irreducible elements and potencies of “Apostolic Genius” or “missional DNA” (mDNA).¹³⁹ Hirsch defines six simple, interrelating elements that form a symbiotic structure which, *together*, form Apostolic Genius. These are: Jesus is LORD- the claim of one God over every aspect of life, Disciple- making, Missional-incarnational impulse, Apostolic environment, organic systems¹⁴⁰ and Communitas-Not Community.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Eugene Peterson, *Under The Unpredictable Plant*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 90.

¹³⁷ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 15.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 22.

¹³⁹ mDNA is an abbreviation for missional DNA and describes the elements that require activation for missional potency to be manifested.

¹⁴⁰ I.E. appropriate structures for metabolic growth.

¹⁴¹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 24-25.

Hirsch presses for a rediscovery of Christology and the person of Jesus as the center point of faith.¹⁴² He expands further that for a recovery of missional imagination, “Faith is once again linked in utter simplicity to Jesus, the author and completer of the faith. So at the heart of all great movements is a recovery of simple Christology (essential conceptions of who Jesus is and what he does) one that accurately reflects the Jesus of New Testament faith.”¹⁴³

Hirsch contends for more than a theological recalibration around the person and work of Christ. He presses for an existential communitarian re-centering around Jesus – a Jesus centered spiritual renewal that reenergizes the people of God and thus fuels the missional impulse. Reflecting on the early church, he writes, “The desperate prayer-soaked human clinging to Jesus, the reliance on His Spirit, and the distillation of the gospel message into the simple, uncluttered message of Jesus as Lord and Savior is what catalyzed the missional potencies inherent in the people of God.”¹⁴⁴ Easum joins Hirsch’s cheerleading section regarding the specificity and necessity of a Jesus-centered vibrant spirituality. “Jesus must be at the center of our passion, not some generic notion of God.”¹⁴⁵

Hirsch not only calls for an experiential re-centering around Jesus but a recovery of disciple-making as the core task of the church. For Hirsch this means “the Founder, *literally*, must somehow *live on* in his people.”¹⁴⁶ Disciple making happens in whole life concrete attachment to the living Jesus. “Discipleship is determined by relation to Christ

¹⁴² Ibid., 68.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 85-86.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 86.

¹⁴⁵ Bill Easum, *A Second Resurrection* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 36.

¹⁴⁶ Hirsch, *The Forgotten ways*, 114.

himself, and the context of this is not the classroom, where teaching usually takes place for us, not even in the church, but in the world.”¹⁴⁷

Hirsch is not alone in calling for the Church to rediscover disciple-making as her central task. Breen claims the missional movement is doomed because leaders and practitioners do not attend to the core activity of making disciples, who make disciples, and therefore this is analogous to a car without an engine.

The missional movement will fail because, by-and-large, we are having a discussion about mission devoid of discipleship. Unless we start having more discussion about discipleship and how we make missionaries out of disciples, this movement will stall and fade. Any discussion about mission must begin with discipleship. If your church community is not yet competent at making disciples who can make disciples, please don't send your members out on mission until you have a growing sense of confidence in your ability to train, equip and disciple them.¹⁴⁸

Hirsch's call for a complete reorientation of the church around mission does not offer a prescriptive sequential road map. However, part of the genius of his contribution is the unequivocal assertion that the re-missioning of the church must be rooted in and flow from a fresh vision and fresh encounter with the Lord Jesus.

Hirsch offers a helpful corrective to the missional renaissance exponents who subscribe to *Vorsprung durch Technik*.¹⁴⁹ Here, ministry is technology and the leader is a technician. This is at the heart of the vision of modernity, namely, the assumption that the combination of human ingenuity and technology will always triumph.

¹⁴⁷ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 67.

¹⁴⁸ Breen Mike, “Why The Missional Movement Will Fail”, Sept 14, 2011, The Verge Blog, accessed Sept 14, 2011, <http://www.vergenetwork.org/2011/09/14/mike-breen-why-the-missional-movement-will-fail/>.

¹⁴⁹ This phrase was used in Audi commercials aired in the UK with the voice over work done by the buttery voiced Geoffrey Palmer. The beautiful high performance vehicles were touted as a triumph of German engineering with the phrase meaning “progress through technology.” See <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2012/sep/18/vorsprung-durch-technik-video>.

Vorsprung durch Technik is in evidence in Dale.¹⁵⁰ He¹⁵¹ proposes four ways to change a church: policy, personnel, new program structures, and fourthly to define and act on its fundamental purpose. Dale describes a healthy church and diagnoses the unhealthy church. He latches on to the sigmoid curve as a visual aid in describing the organizational life cycle of a congregation and the stages and seasons of birth, growth, stagnation, decline, and death.¹⁵²

Dale proposes a trifecta of forces that will shape congregational trajectory: pastoral outlook, congregational climate, and stakeholders' expectations.¹⁵³ He also diagnoses various plateau pathologies that may offer clues regarding issues to be addressed.¹⁵⁴ However, Dale's change strategy does not offer a clear vision of the centrality and power of the gospel.

Ray Ortlund is an exponent of building gospel culture in the life of the church, which he defines as, "The shared experience of grace for the undeserving: the corporate incarnation of the biblical message in the relationships, vibe, feel, tone, values, priorities, aroma, honesty, freedom, gentleness, humility, cheerfulness-indeed, the total human reality of a church defined and sweetened by the gospel."¹⁵⁵ Here, Ortlund not only

¹⁵⁰ Robert D. Dale, *To Dream Again* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004).

¹⁵¹ Dale is not the most significant voice in the Church Growth Movement but does reflect the CGM emphasis that suggests an ecclesiology of church as human enterprise. For Dale, planning is pivotal in the process. Nowhere is prayer mentioned, or the possibility of congregational repentance being countenanced as a catalyst for new spiritual vigor and missional engagement. Planning, as Kotter, demonstrates is critical, but planning itself cannot be pivotal. Planning must be developed in a posture of dependency upon the Lord and openness to His direction. Dale embodies an approach to change that exhibits a pneumatological poverty.

¹⁵² The sigmoid curve is used to illustrate the health cycle, seasons, atmospherics and action required repeatedly: Dale, *To Dream Again*, 15, 17, 19, 26, 34, 50, 60, 64, 77, 89, 115, 118, and 145.

¹⁵³ Dale, *To Dream Again*, 66.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁵⁵ Ray Ortlund, "How to build a gospel culture in your church" (breakout session presentation at The Gospel Coalition, Orlando, April 14, 2015).

upholds a tantalizing vision of a community that is steeped in the gospel – he calls for the deep need for a faith community to be renewed by the gospel.

The renaissance leader must pursue the creation of a new culture. This is more than incremental change or programmatic modifications in the rhythm and routine of church life – it is deep change. This deep change must be fueled, nourished, sustained and empowered by the gospel.

The Spirit of God is The agent of transformation. The need for the Spirit of Jesus to empower a missionally impotent or disengaged body of believers cannot be understated. Spiritual renewal must be at the heart of the change project for the prospect of new and heightened missional engagement to be fueled, sustained, and fruitful. Easum speaks to the enormity of the task. “Every church resurrection I’ve seen begins with a new pastor. That pastor can be someone else- or it can be you, brought to new life.”¹⁵⁶ He goes on to contend for personal spiritual renewal as the fountain from which change flows. The need for the leader to experience personal and spiritual change and the kinds of change that may prove necessary to fuel the change journey are identified below.

Change Pathways

Easum extends an invitation, to surrender job security for the sake of the congregational transformation, a plea that is congruent with Quinn’s call to step into “the fundamental state of leadership.” Easum’s straight shooting is further evidenced when describing the enormity of the change journey for the leader of an established church wanting to guide the congregation to new life.

¹⁵⁶ Bill Easum, *A Second Resurrection*, 41.

Is it possible we have underestimated the seriousness of Western Protestantism's situation? What if the metaphors of reformation, renewal, and revitalization don't get to the heart of the problem? What if the situation is much worse than those words describe? What if the vast majority of congregations in the West are spiritually dead and God no longer considers them to be churches? What if God has one foot out the door of most of Western Protestantism? What if the majority of our churches are like the church of Laodicea in the Book of Revelation? What if God is about to spit us out of his mouth?¹⁵⁷

Easum urges that turnaround does not address the issue. The core issue is not decline or stagnation but death. He calls for the resurrection of the church – not the institution but the spiritually dead people who make up the congregation.¹⁵⁸

Comparing the plight of the church that has lost sight of its mission and succumbed to self-absorption to the resurrection of Jesus speaks to the impossibility of the task at hand, and therefore the need for divine intervention and enablement.¹⁵⁹ Only by the Spirit of God can Christ exalting, fruit-bearing change be effected.¹⁶⁰

Easum offers further candor regarding the hazardous journey for prospective renaissance leaders. “Getting people to buy into the fact that they are spiritually dead isn't going to be easy. Many will simply deny it and turn a deaf ear and start plotting your departure.”¹⁶¹

Having defined organizational reality, the leader must follow a proactive change pathway. The change journey is not a tidy linear pathway like a railroad. It is whitewater rafting. Those bouncing around in the foam do have a destination in mind, are equipped for the journey and must be prepared to improvise and adapt to the unpredictable.

¹⁵⁷ Bill Easum, *A Second Resurrection*, 3-4.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵⁹ The Spirit of God is the One who energized the corpse of Jesus of Nazareth. God the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit raised His own dear Son Jesus from the dead. Paul speaks of “God's incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 1:19-20).

¹⁶⁰ Zechariah 4:6

¹⁶¹ Easum, *A Second Resurrection*, 19.

However, the leader who pursues organizational change and congregational renewal will do so with a roadmap in hand.

Bring Your Jackhammer

Congregations may require a pneumatic drill applied to their foundations and programs! The gospel jackhammer needs to be applied to consumer-oriented congregations in order to establish a reorientation to the gospel. Carlson and Lueken¹⁶² assessed that their congregation's seeker-driven approach was producing consumers and spectators drawn to "the show." They came to a disheartening conclusion that they were drawing a crowd and not developing people who were being formed in Christlikeness. Oak Hills Church was deeply influenced by Willow Creek, and saw significant numerical growth, but were not effectively making disciples.

Ed Carey became the pastor of an aging Anglo Saxon congregation of 30 members in a multiethnic community in East Hollywood.¹⁶³ White flight had left a congregation as a homogenous island in a diversified community. They had no heart for the people around them but lovingly maintained their choir, robes and ornate choir loft.

During his inaugural sermon, Ed reached behind the lectern and began to wield a sledgehammer. He proceeded to demolish the choir loft. He invited those who wanted to continue as church members to join in. This was a defining moment in the life of the church, a Kairos moment. The church shrunk from 30 to 10 that day, but something new was birthed. Today, the church is a thriving multicultural community engaged in the mission of God both locally and globally.

¹⁶² Kent Carlson and Mark Lueken, *Renovation of the Church* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011).

¹⁶³ J.R. Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012), 131-132.

Carey stepped into a congregational culture of slow death. The self-absorbed congregation had lost sight of the mission field. There was no collective expression of love of neighbor. The congregation had to experience death before a new beginning.¹⁶⁴

Carey wielded his sledgehammer at the congregation's idol; a choir loft - a focus of misplaced affection that mired them in the past, missionally disengaged. The change leader may have to bring a sledgehammer to bear on the congregation's idols. Or, as Carlson and Lueken did,¹⁶⁵ apply the gospel jackhammer to the consumerist and narcissistic foundations of their seeker driven enterprise. Deep change may require applying the power of the gospel as a renovating jackhammer to aberrant theological foundations and behaviors in the leadership and life of a congregation.

The first order of business for the leader may simply be calling the congregants to Jesus and transformation. The gospel jackhammer may need skillfully and powerfully applied to an operating system such as, moral therapeutic deism. The renaissance leader, like Carey, may need to engage in skillful demolition and gospel proclamation and renewal before leading the way on mission.

The Power of Change in the Life of the Leader

Quinn points to the need of a changed leader leading the way into organizational renewal and transformation. Quinn assumes a leader who effects transformation will enter the "fundamental state of leadership." Deep, profound transformation must *first take place in the life of the leader*.

¹⁶⁴ John 12:24.

¹⁶⁵ Carlson and Lueken, *Renovation of the Church*.

Miller¹⁶⁶ and Smith¹⁶⁷ bear witness to both the necessity and power of personal transformation in the life of the leader to ignite church transformation.

Both leaders came to the end of their respective ropes. Their frustration brought them into alignment with Jesus' assessment of missional leadership: "apart from me you can do nothing."¹⁶⁸ They both experienced a personal renewal that ignited fresh spiritual vitality – this renewal took root in their respective congregations and created a fresh missional impetus.

Smith wrestled with how much of his ministry was fueled by youthful enthusiasm and idealism and how much was in response to God's summons.¹⁶⁹ While pondering Moses' leadership, he noted that while Moses stepped into leadership in response to a call. "He tried to fulfill that call in his own natural ability."¹⁷⁰

Smith was faced with the unpalatable truth that he had succumbed to professionalization and the routinization of charisma. He had lost sight of Christ in the busyness of ministry and was simply going through the motions. God spoke to him. "At last you have seen it. You cannot do it. I have never asked you to do it. I, only, I can build my church. Will you stand aside and let me build it through you?"¹⁷¹ God spoke further to Smith: "Live in the passive voice. Do not struggle to do: let me live and will through you."¹⁷² This was liberating for Smith who joyfully commented, "I had seen Him as my all in all, not needing any puny efforts of my struggling service."¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

¹⁶⁷ Malcolm Smith, *Turn Your Back On the Problem* (Plainfield N.J.: Logos Publishing, 1972).

¹⁶⁸ John 15:5.

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Turn Your Back On the Problem*, 38.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 59.

¹⁷¹ Smith, *Turn Your Back On the Problem*, 51.

¹⁷² Ibid., 55.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 55.

Lovelace identifies the critical role of pastoral leadership – for better or worse in a church renewal and transformation.

Pastors gradually settle down and lose interest in being change agents in the church. An unconscious conspiracy arises between their flesh and that of their congregations. It becomes tacitly understood that the laity will give pastors special honor in the exercise of their gifts, if the pastors will agree to leave their congregations pre-Christian lifestyles undisturbed and not call for the mobilization of lay gifts for the work of the kingdom. Pastors are permitted to become ministerial superstars. Their pride is fed and their congregations are permitted to remain herds of sheep in which each has cheerfully turned to its own way.¹⁷⁴

Lovelace identifies that leaders because of sinful issues in their own lives and personal insecurities,¹⁷⁵ and also in the life of the congregation do not readily function as change agents. In fact, he identifies a transaction that militates against that – the point leader having superstar status conferred on him in exchange for the faith community being left alone!

Miller laments unbelief as a source of ministry paralysis and claims that the contemporary church is in a crisis of power failure. This results in a lack of zeal for Christ and a lack of confidence in being used by the Lord of the harvest. The local church becomes focused on the personal comfort of its members and adherents. Miller recounts, “I had grown sick to death of the church viewed as a “religious cushion” and me as chief cushioner.”¹⁷⁶ Miller had become a sour and failed change agent. He identified a significant dysfunction in his leadership. He was an approval addict who loved to be loved and who wanted to be liked. In a depressive state he began to see God, the people of God and himself, through tears, in a new light.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1979), 207.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 206.

¹⁷⁶ Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*, 20.

Miller took personal responsibility for his malaise and the congregation's inward focus, by viewing the primary failure as his own.¹⁷⁷ He was drawn into increasing thirst for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. He notes, "I needed to learn how the promises of God, and especially Christ's promise of the Spirit, related to the missionary mandate given by the Lord before His ascension."¹⁷⁸ He was struck by "the 'now character' of promise passages like John 7:37-39...there is a strong now-implication in Jesus' words. The promise of verse 38 is in the Greek present, which is not like our English present; it is linear, ongoing, expressing habitual or continuously present activity. In other words, Jesus was saying, 'The abundance of the Spirit is for those who are believing now and keep right on believing.'"¹⁷⁹

Miller's own stirring affected his leadership and his preaching, as he recounts. "My teaching focused on Christ's willingness to give the Holy Spirit on an ongoing basis to us now, as we in our weakness claimed the promises in prayer."¹⁸⁰ This new emphasis flowed directly from his renewal and personal transformation, and a new disposition towards his flock. "I had a new heart concern for them to enter into a life of faith, conditioned by the freedom of daily surrender to Christ and reliance on His Spirit."¹⁸¹ Miller stepped into a new season of fruitful ministry convinced that God's design and desire was for the Christian to live a Spirit filled life; and that this is the normal Christian life. His journey involved a movement from self-sufficiency and the fatigue that this generates to dependency on the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 24.

Rainer¹⁸² offers insights on leadership and congregations that moved from stagnancy to growth, and borrowing heavily on Jim Collins' work, from mediocrity to greatness. Rainer and his team "were interested in churches that had broken out of a slump."¹⁸³

Rainer reflects on the plight of a pastor who was hospitalized because he internalized the fierce resistance to his leadership, "We are not suggesting that every leader of a breakout church has to find himself in a hospital at some point. Our research shows clearly, though, that the intentional effort to bridge the gap between "what is" and "what should be" comes at some cost to the leader."¹⁸⁴

Rainer suggests that a personal crisis is normative in the change journey. "Once change has begun, a crisis takes place in the heart of the leader, in the members of the church, or even in the attitudes of the members towards the leader. This often painful stage is the time when many pastors leave."¹⁸⁵ Thus, a renaissance leader should anticipate pain as part of the change road map. Rainer's break out leaders "told ...many stories of great hurt and deep wounds in their ministries. Still they persevered."¹⁸⁶

Rainer calls for tenacity, as the leader who precipitates organizational disruption may be the focal point of anger and opposition and the target of blaming. He also identifies that the "breakout leader" will be vulnerable and experience pain. In "walking naked into the land of uncertainty", the leader may experience deep brokenness. This brokenness may lead to the disavowal of self-sufficiency and a deepening dependency on God. It may, as Rainer indicates, prove to be a bridge too far, for many leaders. For

¹⁸² Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

¹⁸³ Ibid., 22.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 72.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 85.

others, it may lead to a giving up of one's rights, an abdication of control, and surrender to Jesus and to an inner death that results in gospel fruitfulness.¹⁸⁷

Saul of Tarsus demonstrates this. His encounter on the Damascus Road was all about relinquishing his abilities and credentials and surrendering to the risen Christ. Paul told the Corinthians that the troubles he experienced had pushed him beyond his ability to endure. *Yet in the midst of despair he experienced the comfort of God and the power of God (2 Cor. 1:3-11)*. Paul's troubles taught him that the treasure of the gospel is carried in fragile jars of clay; this truth emphasized that the gospel's power comes from God, not from the messenger (2 Cor. 4:7-12).¹⁸⁸

The leader who pursues organizational change faces both the challenge of, and the need for personal transformation. Personal discomfort, pain, hostility, or opposition may precipitate this. God the Potter may use adversity as a means of shaping the leader into a more useful vessel.¹⁸⁹

Smith and Miller illustrate the need for full surrender and deep and renewed trust in God. "Before a second resurrection can occur leaders must die to themselves...every leader needs to put Christ first and their petty desires second...the second resurrection begins when all of the leaders are willing to let their church die and trust God to resurrect it."¹⁹⁰

The need for a vital spirituality to sustain and energize the leader cannot be understated. Addison's assessment of movement leaders can be applied to the life of the renaissance leader. "White-hot faith is the fuel that movements run on. Nothing happens without a deep dependence on God."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ John 12:24.

¹⁸⁸ Steve Addison, *Movements That Change the World*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011), 50.

¹⁸⁹ Jeremiah 18:4.

¹⁹⁰ Easum, *A Second Resurrection*, 39.

¹⁹¹ Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 54.

Leadership Profile

Having given consideration to the change pathway and the intentional strategies required for organizational change, a question arises. What kind of leader is able, by God's grace, to pull this off?

Rutland claims "turnaround leadership is a skill, or rather a set of skills." Skills are required in leading through Kotter's change journey. However, the question arises *what type of leader can be an agent of missional renewal?*

Stetzer claims there is no definitive profile. "It would be impossible or unwise to say that a "Comeback Pastor" is a certain personality, gift mix or profile."¹⁹² This astonishing claim reflects the lack of literature offering a renaissance leader portrait. It also reflects Stetzer's research,¹⁹³ which was a quantitative telephone survey conducted of some 300 American churches. Stetzer favors church planting assessment centers and adheres to the common wisdom that there are building blocks that constitute an optimal church planter profile. It is incongruous that he dismisses the notion that a certain kind of leader, due to personality and spiritual gifting, is predisposed as an agent for missional renewal in a tired or troubled church.

While there are indeed competencies that support and leverage the change project, generating a list of necessary or preferred skills is not the focus of this literature survey. The focus, here is on the *kind of pastor who by virtue of their personality, their spiritual gifting and their spiritual posture is predisposed to renaissance leadership*. Of interest here, are the desired dimensions for a fruitful and effective renaissance leader.

¹⁹² Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville: B & H, 2007) 187.

¹⁹³ Stetzer's claim is at variance with the focus of this research project; the quest for the renaissance leader. I cite him to acknowledge a naysayer and to illustrate the paucity of literature on what might be called a "renaissance leadership profile. "As indicated above, I find Stetzer's assertion both surprising and untenable.

The Evangelical Free Church asserts that the optimal personality profile for a church planter is “The Inventor”; the ENFP personality in the Myers-Briggs Test.¹⁹⁴ Youth for Christ in the United States has used their Predictive Index as part of staff discernment and placement, with particular interest in the suitability of Executive Directors to oversee local chapters.¹⁹⁵ It follows that personality profile or leadership style can be more than informative. This can indicate the suitability of a leader for a specific role and set of responsibilities. More than that, as is the focus of this study, personality can be a predictor of the ability of a leader to catalyze missional renewal.

In their most basic form, the way we *think* and the way we *act* define our personality. Emotions are the reaction to our attitude and behavior. Dr. John Geier, pioneer in the creation of self-administered, self-scored personality tests, defines personality as: “*How we view and respond to life’s situations.*” DISC is a descriptive framework to identify and describe our personality through the lenses of thoughts and actions.¹⁹⁶

The DISC Profile was used as a leadership diagnostic of 15 leaders in this project.¹⁹⁷ The DISC profile has been utilized as part of church planter assessment where high D and high I leaders and D/I leaders have historically been deemed as the preferred church planter profiles.¹⁹⁸ A discussion of the usefulness of DISC is offered in Chapter Four.

According to Malphurs and Penfold, leaders who have a combination of D and I

¹⁹⁴ Mission USA Church Planting, *Church Planter Self-Evaluation* (Minneapolis: Evangelical Free Church of America, no date), 30.

¹⁹⁵ This was the practice when I was hired as an Evangelist-At-Large for Seattle Area YFC. YFC had four ED profiles; two of which were preferred for the ED who is the “point leader” in a Youth For Christ expression.

¹⁹⁶ Strategic Team Makers, *Portrait Predictor DISC Manual* (Minneapolis: Strategic Team Makers Inc., 2008), 2.

¹⁹⁷ DISC identifies four types: D –dominant /directive; I- influencing /interactive; S –steady/supportive and C – cautious /corrective. The DISC offers a leadership profile that is a unique combination of these types. Of particular interest in this diagnostic is the prominent or primary type and the secondary type in the leadership profile.

¹⁹⁸ Conversation with Scott Thomas at C2C Calgary Church Planting Assessment Centre, Sept 2014. Thomas shared this information gleaned from his former role as Acts 29 Network Director.

or are a lone D or I “to an overwhelming degree”¹⁹⁹ are suited for the demands and dynamics of being a “re-envisioning pastor.” Malphurs and Penfold intentionally use the label, “re-envisioning pastor “(REP) because of their conviction about the significance and weight of fresh God honoring vision in a church transformation. They conducted research on REPs and NREPS (non-re-envisioning pastors)²⁰⁰. They examined the DISC profiles of REPs. REPs were classified as being able to go into a plateaued or declined congregation and preside over numerical growth. They discovered almost three out of four (73%) of the leaders surveyed “patterned as some combination of the D or I temperament on the Personal Profile.”²⁰¹

In reflecting on the significance of their findings Malphurs and Penfold comment, “Pastors must understand their divine design in order to improve their ability to serve the body of Christ.”²⁰² This comment directed at leaders contemplating the prospect of a congregational re-imagination and transformation, speaks to the issue of fit. What kind of leader is the best fit for this ministry? The DISC profile helps identify the leadership styles that thrive, flourish and bear fruit in a missional renaissance.

Leader Profile – Beyond Personality – the Power of Gifting

A personality profile such as DISC has much to commend it. It enables a pre-emptive avoiding of the misery of misplacement and evaluates the fit and even level of fit for a role or project or task. Further to this the role of spiritual gifts and charismatic

¹⁹⁹ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re-VISION – The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 135.

²⁰⁰ Re-envisioning Pastors and Non-Re-Envisioning Pastor

²⁰¹ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re-VISION*, 111 sampled 103 leaders who met their REP criteria and identified 75 as D, I or a DI combination.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 112-113.

empowerment for leadership must be considered.

Winter contended that two divinely ordained redemptive strategies can be discerned in Church history. His essay, “The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission”²⁰³ is an apologetic for the legitimacy of missionary societies and has been used to validate the viability of “parachurch” ministries and movements.²⁰⁴ He classifies these redemptive structures as modalities and sodalities.

These structures require different kinds of leadership – sodalic and modalic. Breen supports these distinctions. Breen categorizes fivefold ministry²⁰⁵ as pioneers and settlers. Pioneers- the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, “enjoy change...love breakthroughs and are always looking for the next frontier to explore and tame.” “In contrast, settlers, who are the pastors and teachers are committed to continuity, stability, and conservation.”²⁰⁶

Both pioneers and settlers are required. The pioneers blaze new trails and establish new works and settlers are required to build on and stabilize the pioneering work to create something that is lasting. If a ministry moved from stability to ossification, a pioneer or sodalic leader is required to re-establish fresh missional imagination, impulse and engagement. The apostolic vision of gospel expansion is called for in reviving the missionary heart of an ossified body of people. Paul expresses this gospel pioneer spirit.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Ralph D. Winter, “The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission“ in Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne(eds.), *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement – a reader*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library Publ., 1981), 178-190.

²⁰⁴ When I was in Youth For Christ, the two redemptive structures were used as a rationale for our existence when critics questioned the validity of YFC operating outside the sphere, governance and supervision of local churches.

²⁰⁵ Ephesians 4:11-12.

²⁰⁶ Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad, *Passionate Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2005), 150.

²⁰⁷ Romans 15:20.

This literature review points to something that will be explored further in the following chapter on Bible and Theology in its exposition of missional leadership. There is a significant need to affirm and deploy apostolic leaders as catalysts who trigger fresh gospel faithfulness and missional imagination and activate missionary expansion. The need for generative leadership gifts apostle, prophet and evangelist to create missional impulse and particularly apostolic leadership with its distinct dimensions will be explored in the next chapter.

The literature review created an expectation that the most fruitful and effective renaissance leaders would be apostolic. This assumption led to administering the APEST assessment.”²⁰⁸ This diagnostic approach will be explained in Chapter Four.

²⁰⁸ <http://www.theforgottenways.org/what-is-apest.aspx>, (accessed April 10, 2013).

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

Introduction

This research project focuses on the dynamic interplay of mission, renewal, and leadership. This chapter seeks to develop the Biblical and theological foundations that support the journey towards missional renaissance.

From this survey a normative framework of Biblical, theological and ethical perspectives and themes is developed to evaluate the pastoral leadership under review. The primary concern is not that these leaders prove to be innovative or effective but that they display faithfulness to the Word of God and to the gospel. This normative task is an exercise in prophetic discernment. Osmer defines the task at hand. “Prophetic discernment is the task of listening to this Word and interpreting it in ways that address particular social conditions, events, and decisions before congregations today.”¹ This leads to “...using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from “good practice.”²

The theological themes explored are formulated to identify “what ought to be” in the journey and praxis of a renaissance leader. Mission flows from the nature and character of God. “Mission arises from the heart of God himself; and is communicated from his heart to ours. Mission is the global outreach of the global people of a global God.”³

The mission of God is global and local in its scope. The congregation that embraces the heart of God will reach around the globe as a reflection of God’s heart for

¹ Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 135.

² Ibid., 4

³ Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God ‘s People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 24.

the nations and reach around the corner reflecting God's heart for communities and neighborhoods. Mission is from "everywhere to everywhere." Jesus sends his followers on mission. "The mission field is everywhere, including your own street – wherever there is ignorance or rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ."⁴

A vital indicator of congregational vitality and collective obedience is how demonstrably a faith community participates in Jesus' mission. The faithful company of believers will demonstrably give expression to living sent.⁵

Missiology: Behold Your Missionary God!

The missionary God is revealed in the opening pages of Scripture, where He sends His Word and sends His Spirit in the creation account. Verkuyl claims the Old Testament contains a "universal motif"⁶ and a "motif of rescue and liberation"⁷ both of which reveal the missionary character and purpose of God.

"The God who in the Old Testament identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and who discloses to Moses his personal name, Yahweh, is the God of the whole world. The experience of a few patriarchs and later the one nation of Israel with this God extends to include the horizon of the entire world."⁸

The universal motif contradicts Israel's narrow exclusivist view of God's concern. Israel was chosen by Yahweh by grace to be a light to the nations." God's election of Israel (was) with His eye on the nations."⁹

⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁵ John 20:21.

⁶ Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 91.

⁷ Ibid., 92.

⁸ Ibid., 91.

⁹ Ibid., 91

Israel was chosen and set apart for a purpose. “The purpose of the election, is service, and when this is withheld, election loses its meaning. Primarily Israel is to serve the marginal in its midst: the orphan, the widow, the poor and the stranger. Whenever the people of Israel renew their covenant with Yahweh, they recognize that they are renewing their obligations to the victims of society.”¹⁰ Again the renewal of relationship with Yahweh is intertwined with and related to the loving and serving of others. The renewal of the covenant, and the renewed commitment to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob results in a fresh expression of other-centeredness.

God has a redemptive purpose and concern for the whole world as revealed in The Table of Nations.¹¹ God judges the nations at Babel and commissions Abram to pull up the tent pegs that he might become a conduit of blessing to all the nations of the world. “The call to Sarah and Abraham has to do not simply with the forming of Israel but with the re-forming of creation, the transforming of nations.”¹²

The Abrahamic call demonstrates that the mission of God precedes the birth of the church and takes theological and ontological precedence over the church. Therefore, missiology should inform and shape ecclesiology. “It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission- God’s mission.”¹³

¹⁰ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 18.

¹¹ Genesis 10.

¹² Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 105.

¹³ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 62.

Isaiah, the career prophet, has an encounter with the Lord that left him thunderstruck by God's blazing holiness¹⁴. There is debate about whether or not this passage constitutes an inaugural call or a re-commission or even if Isaiah 6 can even be identified as an O.T. "call narrative."¹⁵ "Traditionally, it was thought that the order of chapters 1-5 proceeded largely according to a chronological sequence. Calvin took his lead from the superscription in seeing Isaiah active during the reign of King Uzziah and in holding these early oracles to be contained in chapters 2-5."¹⁶

As Childs contends, "the currently formulated polarity between call and commission does not address adequately the theological dimension of the text."¹⁷ In other words, the primary concern should be the substance of this passage. The proposed polarity can serve as a distraction from attending to the theological and missiological weight of what is recounted.

It opens with Isaiah's account of his experience of the forgiveness of sins at the hands of the holy God (6:1-7), his call to be a prophet (6:8), and the strange commission the Lord gave him (6:9-13). This opening is matched by the song (12:1-6) in which individual (12:1-2) and community (12:3) enter into salvation through the turning away of divine anger (12:1), are commissioned to worldwide prophecy (12:4-5), and have the Holy God dwelling among them (12:6). This is a

¹⁴ Isaiah 6:5.

¹⁵ There has been a Form-Critical debate regarding the genre of Isaiah 6. Zimmerli for example, in his Ezekiel commentary distinguishes between two forms of Old Testament call narrative. Childs explains: "One is found in Exodus 3 (Moses), Judges 6 (Gideon), and Jeremiah 1 (Jeremiah). The recipient is initially reluctant to the divine call, offering reasons for refusal, but his reluctance is overcome, usually with the aid of a sign and he is finally commissioned as a prophetic messenger. The other form has its primary textual example in 1 Kings 22 (Micaiah Ben Imlah) and is set in the context of the divine council in which God deliberates with his court. The messenger, overhearing the conversation, volunteers and is commissioned for a special task."-Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 52.

The problem with this argument is that the idea of volunteerism for a divine appointment is built largely upon the single text cited above (1 Kings 22). More tellingly, if a prophetic messenger actually overhears God in his heavenly council, it is by divine invitation and divine initiative. Most of the resistance to the notion of Isaiah's close encounter of the God kind being labelled a "call narrative" is related to its position in the text, i.e. because the book does not open with this searing vision.

¹⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 51-52.

¹⁷ Ibid., 52.

very full *inclusio*, with sin, salvation, commissioning and divine holiness bracketing the whole section.¹⁸

Isaiah discovered that God is a missionary God: “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?””¹⁹ This is not an isolated truth, throughout Scripture YHWH reveals Himself as the sending God. As Bosch declares, mission is part of the nature and character of God “mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God.”²⁰ Isaiah’s overwhelming encounter with the majesty and holiness of God leads to a profound awareness of his own sinfulness and brokenness. In his despair, he cries out and experiences cleansing. Then the renewed prophet is sent by the sending God.

Reflecting on Isaiah 6, Miscall cites Watts²¹ and claims, “this is not a call narrative since there is no hint that this was the prophet’s first encounter with the divine.”²² This actually strengthens the case for renewal since this position asserts that a seasoned leader, a prophet exercising his ministry, still needs to hear from God afresh and experience God afresh.

Wherever one lands on the “call narrative” polarity, Isaiah is sent. Miscall writes: “The prophet is sent with a word. This sets in motion a series of sendings: his word, both destructive and saving (9.7; 55.11), Assyria (10.6), disease (10.16), his servant and messenger (42.19; 48.16; 61.1) and the remnant (66.19).”²³

Isaiah saw the glory (*kabod*) of God, in his outer manifestation. The glory of God “describes the superlative honor that should be given to God by everything in the

¹⁸ J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1999), 34.

¹⁹ Isaiah 6:8.

²⁰ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: NY, Orbis, 1996), 389-390.

²¹ John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33, Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 70-73.

²² Peter D. Miscall, *Isaiah 2nd Edition*, (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2006), 45.

²³ *Ibid.*, 49

universe ...in another sense, God's glory means the bright light that surrounds God's presence...God's glory is the created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of himself."²⁴ Isaiah experiences the "glory of his majesty."²⁵ He is confronted with God's holiness, which is not so much an ethical quality in the Godhead rather, "the essence of God's nature as separate and utterly removed from the profane."²⁶ "The threefold repetition of the word "holy" emphasizes the superlative degree to which God manifested this characteristic."²⁷ Motyer outlines the impact of Isaiah's encounter with God.

The immediate effect of atonement is reconciliation. Isaiah first saw the Lord afar off (1), but now he is near enough to overhear the divine musing; he had once been 'silenced' by sin (5) but as the redeemed sinner he is free to speak. The God who shut him out (4) has brought him home. But he finds that being joined to God means joining a missionary society: he has been brought in in order to be sent out. Us: a plural of consultation (1 Kgs 22:19–23), but the New Testament relates these verses to both the Lord Jesus (John 12:24) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25), thus finding here what will yet accommodate the full revelation of the Holy Trinity.²⁸

This episode remains illustrative of how renewal and sent-ness are intertwined, because salvation and renewal involve encountering a God on mission.

To know God is to change, and to be saved by him implies a commitment to live a life consistent with who he is...because it is an encounter with the sending God (*missio Dei*), we will also find ourselves deeply obligated to extend the message contained in and transferred to us in the God encounter.²⁹

Thus, "the church exists in being sent and in building itself up for the sake of its mission...Since God is a missionary God...God's people are missionary people."³⁰

Bosch, who does not offer a significant exposition of mission in the Old Testament³¹, in his magnum opus, does identify missionary activity and a missionary

²⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 220.

²⁵ Isaiah 2:19.

²⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 53.

²⁷ Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 62.

²⁸ Motyer, *Isaiah*, 145.

²⁹ Alan Hirsch & Tim Ketchum, *The Permanent Revolution* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2012), 144.

³⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 372.

agenda. "...if there is a "missionary" in the Old Testament, it is God Himself who will as his eschatological deed, par excellence, bring the nations to Jerusalem to worship him there together with his covenant people."³² The living God is the missionary God!

The nations are waiting for Yahweh and trusting in him (Isa 51:5). His glory will be revealed to them all (Isa 40:5). All the ends of the earth are called upon to look to God and be saved (Isa 45:22). He makes his servant known as a light to the Gentiles (Isa 42:6,49:6). A highway is constructed, from Egypt and Assyria to Jerusalem (Isa 19:23); the nations encourage each other to go up to the mountain of the Lord (Isa 2:5). And they carry precious gifts with them (Isa 18:7). The purpose of all of this is to worship at the temple in Jerusalem, the sanctuary of the whole world, together with the covenant people (Ps 96:9). Egypt will be blessed as God's people, Assyria as the work of his hands, and Israel as his heritage (Isa 19:25). The visible expression of his global reconciliation will be the celebration of the messianic banquet upon the mountain of God; the nations will behold God with unveiled faces, and death will be swallowed up forever (Isa 25:6-8).³³

The Book of Isaiah further issues the summons and invitation to behold the Missionary God! "The post-exilic community – or a section within it- took up the possibility of salvation which Isaiah 42:1-4 had opened up, and in the Servant's name proclaimed to the heathen that Yahweh's salvation was available for them, and that the light they were awaiting was now there."³⁴

God declares:" "Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations."³⁵ The people of God experience a disruptive trumpet blast in Isaiah 58 because despite their diligent piety they are not expressing the light of the justice of God. True God honoring fasting involves

³¹ Bosch, *Ibid.*, 17. asserts that while the O.T. is fundamental to understanding mission in the NT – he nods approvingly of Rzepowski's claim "The decisive difference between the Old and New Testament is mission. The New Testament is essentially a book about mission."

³² *Ibid.*, 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁴ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 235.

³⁵ Isaiah 51:4.

addressing injustice, letting the oppressed go free, feeding the poor, clothing the naked and extending radical hospitality to the poor wandering refugee.³⁶

Only once there is repentance and a concomitant pursuit of justice will God's old people in the old covenant express their calling as radiating God's light to the darkened nations.

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.³⁷

Israel's call to exercise global redemptive influence is further expressed in Isaiah: "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn"³⁸

The purpose of God's shining his glory with his people becomes explicit in (Isaiah) 60:2-3. Israel has a mission: The 'nations' are in "darkness" because they do not know the one Creator, who is thereby the one Savior. When the light of God dawns in Israel, the nations will recognize it for what it is and "come" flowing to it. Zion's light is not for itself but for others.³⁹

The Book of Jonah serves as a tract featuring the "Un-Apostle" who resists the call of God to the nations. Jonah's narrative challenges Israel to see afresh the tender compassion of YHWH, Lord of the nations, and to repent of their ethnocentric exclusivism." The writer sets forth Jonah as the type⁴⁰ of the narrow-minded, exclusive

³⁶ Isaiah 58:6-7.

³⁷ Isaiah 58:8.

³⁸ Isaiah 60:3.

³⁹ John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 642.

⁴⁰ Here, Oesterley and Robinson dismiss the historicity of the events recorded in Jonah – a view challenged by Aalders, for example. (See G. Aalders, *The Problem of the Book of Jonah*, (Leicester: IVP, n.d.). However, the writers clearly identify the theological purpose of Jonah, that the prophet "personifies Jewish narrow-minded particularism"

Jew, who not only despises non-Jews, but conceives of the Almighty as the God of the Jews only, and as a God who has no care for the rest of his creation.”⁴¹

Harrison comments on the depth of Jonah’s ethnocentrism,” Jonah prayed for his own death rather than witness the spectacle of Gentiles being admitted to divine favor .”⁴²

With his narrow worldview and smallness of heart, the prophet is an Old Covenant anticipation of the surly older brother who protests the generosity and acceptance of the waiting father.⁴³ Jonah serves as a cardiovascular and missional corrective to Israel.

A careful reading of this prophecy would seem to make clear that it was meant in the main to impress upon the Israelites the fact that the mercy and salvation of God extended far beyond the Chosen Race to embrace the whole of humanity. A perceptive Hebrew might also see in the dealings of God with Jonah a rebuke to Israel for its failure to implement the missionary concepts inherent in the Sinai Covenant.⁴⁴

Jonah embodies un-mission. He speaks to a nation who did not embrace the heart and vision of the Missionary God who will gather the nations as his treasured possession. He is a disobedient prophet who contradicts the apostolic impulse voiced later by Jesus the Messiah.⁴⁵ The Book of Jonah is a missive that challenges the nationalistic exclusivism and missional myopia of God’s people. It contradicts the notion that Israel was the particular and unique focus of God’s concern. God’s love, concern and redemptive purposes extend beyond the borders of Israel, and encompasses the nations. God’s concern extends to Israel’s enemies, the dreaded Assyrians. It is more than an account of a reluctant missionary, it is a revelation of the compassion and tenderness of

⁴¹ W.O.E. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1934), 375.

⁴² R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1973), 904.

⁴³ Luke 15:11-31.

⁴⁴ Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 918.

⁴⁵ John 20:21.

Yahweh.⁴⁶ Jonah “plays out the story of Old Testament Israel: he refuses his role in the mission of God: he is swallowed up in captivity; when released, he reluctantly obeys, then he pouts when God blesses other people.”⁴⁷

Bakke sees in this an invitation to view the world differently.

Jonah didn’t love the Ninevites. He couldn’t, humanly speaking, because they had destroyed his people. He didn’t understand that his God was bigger than his culture. He couldn’t quite understand grace- that God was willing to forgive the most violent people in the Middle East, the Assyrians, who had for hundreds of years destroyed the Jews. But God is a God of mission, not retaliation.⁴⁸

Alignment with God’s missionary agenda involves change. In the Old Testament, Israel was called as a “light to the nations”. However, through idolatry, disobedience, and missional myopia, Israel repeatedly lost sight of this.

In the New Testament, faith communities lose sight of their calling and need apostolic correction to live as gospel-centered God honoring communities. The church at Corinth succumbed to sectarianism, heresy, and sexual license. The Southern Galatia churches had drifted from the life-giving gospel of grace. The seven churches in Asia received prophetic communications from Jesus addressing issues of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. All these groups are called to change. These faith communities are called to repentance, revitalization, transformation and alignment with the mission and purpose of God.

While God does not change and while he reminds his covenant people he does not change;⁴⁹ there is a constant call from Scripture for the people of God to commit to ongoing change. This project focused on how leaders given oversight of faith

⁴⁶ Jonah 4:2; Jonah 4:10-11.

⁴⁷ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009), 28.

⁴⁸ Ray Bakke, *A Biblical Word for an Urban World* (Valley Forge, Board of International Ministries, American Baptist Churches in the USA, 2000), 18.

⁴⁹ Malachi 3:8.

communities discerned the divine call to congregational change and traces the change journey in both the leader and the congregation or organization. The call and summons to change is not only a call to develop a new organizational culture, but to experience the God of renewal in fresh ways. God calls his people not to be anchored to the past, but to be open to renewal and innovation.⁵⁰

Jesus calls his people to radical kingdom reorientation. This is illustrated in his teaching on wineskins.⁵¹ Jesus came and upended the familiar patterns of religious life! Jesus was not dictated to by the status quo. Jesus had a redemptive agenda and discarded things that got in the way of it. This approach, namely, discarding activities, structure and habits that do not serve the kingdom of God must characterize the missional leader and the missional community. This means entrenched traditions must be challenged. Established programs and strategies will need to be discarded. This means experimentation and a willingness to step out of the box, must typify the renaissance leader. “The renaissance leader will undoubtedly need the courage to turn sacred cows into gourmet burgers!”⁵²

Every age knows the temptation to forget that the gospel is ever new. We try to contain the new wine of the gospel in old wineskins- outmoded tradition, obsolete philosophies, creaking institutions, old habits. But with time the old wineskins begin to bind the gospel. Then they must burst, and the power of the gospel pours forth once more. Many times this has happened in the history of the Church. Human nature wants to conserve, but the divine nature is to renew. It seems almost a law that things created to aid the gospel eventually become obstacles-old wineskins.⁵³

⁵⁰ Isaiah 43:18-19.

⁵¹ Mark 2:18-22.

⁵² This lovely turn of phrase comes from Bill Easum, *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

⁵³ Howard A. Snyder, *The Problem of Wineskins: Church Structure in a Technological Age* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1977), 15-16.

The New Testament is a book of mission. It can be argued that each gospel writer has a Great Commission with a unique focus or twist.⁵⁴ Jesus comes to Israel, but he does so as the Savior of the whole world.⁵⁵ Luke-Acts is one volume where what Jesus began is continued and expanded through the missionary movement that gives legs and feet to Acts 1:8. “Luke regards Jesus’ mission as universal in intent but incomplete in execution.”⁵⁶

In Matthew the missional focus of Jesus is disciple making. The Great Commission is not an addendum or afterthought with the resurrected Lord of life directing his followers to cross boundaries and barriers to make disciples. “As you go – disciple!” is the sense of Jesus’ assignment.⁵⁷ He issues a disciple making mandate to his disciples. He issues an imperative – as you go – disciple! Or in your going – make disciples! In this imperative; baptizing, instructing, teaching to obey are all subordinate to this primary enterprise, μαθητευσατε.

In Luke’s gospel the missional focus is the outsider – seen in the centrality of the poor in Jesus’ ministry and the setting aside of vengeance⁵⁸. The theme of the “outsider” is taken up in the missionary expansion recorded in Acts – where the “outsider” is the Gentile – who is within the scope of God’s love, concern and redeeming power. In Acts, we are introduced to the inquisitor and enforcer, Saul of Tarsus, who is surprised by grace and by God’s grace becomes a missionary tour de force as apostle to the Gentiles. He was a pioneer and strategist who voiced his assignment as:

⁵⁴ Matthew 28:16-20, the contested Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:46-49, John 20:19-23

⁵⁵ Matthew, whose Jewish agenda is repeatedly expressed by showing how Jesus fulfilled OT prophecies – demonstrates this in the birth narrative where the nations come to worship the Child – see Matthew 2:1-12

⁵⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 88.

⁵⁷ Matthew 28:16-20.

⁵⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89.

“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”⁵⁹

Acts 1:8 serves as a key verse in understanding mission in Acts. Jesus mission must flow out of Holy Spirit empowerment in ever increasing spheres of redemptive influence and gospel impact. A further missiological discussion will follow below, as Jesus is explored as the Missional Leader par excellence.

Missional Ecclesiology: Living as the People of God on Mission

The New Testament defines the *raison d'être* of the church to be missionary witness to the world, thus at one stroke sharply focusing its purpose while subsuming other functions under mission. Accordingly, both Christian witness and discipleship are worked out in scripture in light of that primal tension which marks the people of God and the world which does not acknowledge God's sovereignty, with a view to elucidating the church's calling to be the agent of reconciliation between the world and its Creator (2 Cor. 5:16-20).⁶⁰

This missional ecclesiology is not without its critics. Chan labels this an instrumentalist or functionalist ecclesiology. He asks, “Is the church to be seen as an instrument to accomplish God's purpose in creation, or is the church the ultimate expression of God's purpose for itself?”⁶¹

Chan claims: “The church precedes creation in that it is what God has in view from all eternity and creation is the means by which God fulfills his eternal purpose in

⁵⁹ Acts 26:17-18.

⁶⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, *The Mission Dynamic*, in Willem Saayman & Kritzinger Klippies (eds.) *Mission in Bold Humility – David Bosch's Work Considered* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 83.

⁶¹ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology, The Church as Worshipping Community* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 21.

time. The church does not exist in order to fix a broken creation, rather creation exists to realize the church.”⁶²

Chan addresses the pragmatism, rationalism and reductionism of contemporary evangelicalism with its propensity to ecclesiology-lite. He tackles the prevalent tendency to worship-as-entertainment in both charismatic and evangelical gatherings. However, in his assertion that the “church is an ontological reality” – not an entity called out to do or participate – but which exists for itself and for God – he constructs an ecclesiocentric paradigm.

He writes: “What marks Christians as God's people is that they have become a community that worships God in spirit and in truth. This is what the church must aim at in mission. Mission does not seek to turn sinners into saved individuals; it seeks, rather, to turn disparate individuals into a worshipping community.”⁶³

Here he identifies a very narrow view of mission⁶⁴ as simply and singularly soul winning. However, the Lausanne Movement presents mission as much wider than soul winning⁶⁵ and exponents of holistic mission view mission as alerting people to the rule and reign of God in Christ. In the latter understanding evangelism and social engagement are deemed as equally important, thus neither one should be given precedence over the other. All this illustrates that there is significant dissonance with Chan’s narrow vision of mission. Chan lacks both cosmic and eschatological dimensions to his missional framework. God’s purposes involve the renewal of all things, including the whole created

⁶² Ibid., 23.

⁶³ Ibid., 45.

⁶⁴ David J. Bosch, “Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-Currents Today”, IBMR, Vol. 11, No. 3 (July 1987): 98-103.

⁶⁵ “Lausanne Covenant, Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization,” accessed June 15, 2016, <https://www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant> see especially articles 4,5 & 6.

order.⁶⁶ While Chan presses for an ecclesiology that emphasizes both the church's distinction from Christ and her identification with Christ; he does not properly distinguish between the church and the kingdom.

The kingdom of God is real and is both present and future. "The future eschatological kingdom has already begun in Jesus' mission."⁶⁷ The kingdom of God is the "reign and dominion of God."⁶⁸ Chan does not recognize that the Church must be distinguished from the kingdom.⁶⁹ "The kingdom creates the church"⁷⁰ and the church bears witness to the kingdom⁷¹ as "the custodian of the kingdom."⁷²

The church of Jesus needs to be understood not simply as a sending agency, where mission is from the West to the rest or from "here to there." Mission is from everywhere to everywhere and the church must be understood as sent. The church is God's missionary or "The Church as Apostle to the world."⁷³

Mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation." Mission" means "sending", and it is the central biblical theme describing God's action in human history. God's mission began with the call of Israel to receive God's blessings in order to be a blessing to the nations. God's mission unfolded in the history of God's people across the centuries recorded in Scripture, and it reached its revelatory climax in the incarnation of God's work of salvation in Jesus ministering, crucified and resurrected. God's mission continued then in the sending of the Spirit to call forth and empower the church as God's witness to good news in Jesus Christ.⁷⁴

The missional church will be evangelistic but more than an evangelistic agency.

⁶⁶ Romans 8:18-23.

⁶⁷ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 59.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 11-119.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 113.

⁷¹ Ibid., 113.

⁷² Ibid., 116.

⁷³ Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church – A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 110-140.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

Keller proposes that a congregation on mission can be identified by six dimensions.⁷⁵

Firstly, a love for the city and the broader community beyond the church. Secondly, discourse in the vernacular, in other words language, liturgy, symbols, proclamation that is accessible to the neighborhood or parish. Keller claims that if a leader wants to reach the neighborhood, he must preach to the neighborhood. Thirdly, missional engagement typified by “entering and retelling the culture’s stories with the gospel.” Fourthly, the equipping of the people of God for service, including “theologically training lay people for public life and vocation.”⁷⁶ Fifthly, the creation of Christian community that is both countercultural and counterintuitive. Keller comments: “In Christendom,” fellowship” is basically just a set of nurturing relationships, support, and accountability. These are necessary, of course. In a missional church, however, Christian community must go beyond that to embody a counterculture, showing the world how radically different a Christian society is with regard to sex, money, and power.”⁷⁷

The sixth feature, Keller proposes, is practicing Christian unity at the local level as much as possible. For an established church to embody these missional moves, a shift supported by a new scorecard is required.⁷⁸ This involves being on mission as the people of God rather than doing missions, with a shift from an internal focus to an external focus being required. In addition, a shift to a kingdom focus rather than an ecclesiocentric focus is needed⁷⁹. This latter shift can only be brought about by a shift in worldview⁸⁰. Here, “A kingdom-oriented approach seeks to leverage the gospel into people’s lives

⁷⁵ Timothy Keller, *The Missional Church* (New York: Redeemer City To City, 2009).

⁷⁶ Timothy Keller, *Missional Church*, 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁸ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 67-68.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

where they live, work, and play.”⁸¹ A passive church that assumes that people will be sucked into its orbit and influence must navigate the shift from attractional to incarnational.

The practical challenge is to identify what this might look like and how to evaluate and measure missional engagement. A congregation may celebrate its core values, but these values, such as generous hospitality, or extravagant generosity, or lavish planting of the gospel may all simply be aspirational. The corporate culture and individual believers may be out of step with the espoused values. Behaviors need to be monitored and measured.

Frost⁸² developed an acrostic, BELLS, that measures missional engagement in the rhythm of a week. The behaviors are Bless, Eat, Listen, Learn and Sent. This can be infused into a discipleship group as a means of fueling missional impulse. Frost advocates blessing three people in a week one a believer, one an unbeliever and the third person can be either. Recognizing the redemptive power of hospitality eating similarly involves sharing meals with three people. Listen involves a weekly discipline of silence of at least one unbroken hour. Learning raises the issue of immersion in Scripture, especially the gospels, and asks what have I learned from Jesus this week? Sent raises an accountability question around missional engagement. Where have I followed Jesus and where have I resisted Jesus this week?

Breen contends for missional expression in three directions. This, Breen claims, is a reflection of Jesus’ three great loves and three dimensions to his life. “Up: deep and connected relationship to his Father and attentiveness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In:

⁸¹ Ibid., 45.

⁸² Michael Frost, *Surprise The World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People* (Colorado Springs: Navigators Press, 2016).

constant investment in the relationship with those around him (disciples). Out: entering into the brokenness of the world, looking for a response individually (people coming into a relationship with Jesus and His Father) and systemically (systems of injustice being transformed).”⁸³ Breen supports this paradigm a “pattern for living a balanced life (that is evident through Scripture and needs to be expressed individually and in community life.”⁸⁴

Frost and Breen both, in their unique attempts, draw attention to the fact that people cannot simply be exhorted, cajoled, or inspired into life on mission. Even people who have been renewed and have had their affection for Jesus stirred afresh and who are agitated about lost humanity and brokenness need supported on mission. Moving a congregation into missional renaissance will require a new culture, not only with new language, and perhaps new symbols, but new behaviors which embody a life on mission. These paradigms offer a road to missional living. These patterns and behaviors also offer legs and feet to new aspirational values reflecting missional engagement. A congregation will not be renewed by framing new core values, but by a new way of living which reflects the heart of God and participation in the mission of God. Breen and Frost also offers a way to answer the leadership question – how do we know we are actually following Jesus on mission and offer a way forward in measuring, perhaps with new metrics for missional engagement.

⁸³ Mike Breen, *Leading Kingdom Movements* (Myrtle Beach: 3DM Publishing, 2013), ii-iii.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, iii.

An Invitation to Renewal

The invitation to renewal is extended throughout Scripture. Isaiah promises:

The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.⁸⁵

Jesus promises streams of living water for the thirsty.⁸⁶ It is God's purpose that his people "walk in newness of life."⁸⁷ Renewal involves turning or returning to God. God extends the invitation to "draw near" to him that he might draw near to a believer or faith community.⁸⁸

With these ideas of turning and drawing near in mind, exploring a Biblical understanding of "conversion" helps shape a Biblical theology of renewal. Smail offers "a clue to all authentic Christian renewal...seek God Himself. The heart of personal renewal ...is in opening yourself up to God. It means turning from all the things you have been doing for him, to ask him to do what only he can do and breathe his life and energy into you."⁸⁹

Smail⁹⁰ also contends that the experience of renewal might be summed up: "All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved."⁹¹ With the idea of renewal involving turning to and calling on the Lord, what follows is a brief Biblical review of the theology and phenomenon of conversion. This is used to frame an understanding of both personal

⁸⁵ Isaiah 58:11.

⁸⁶ John 7:37-39.

⁸⁷ Romans 6:4, English Standard Version.

⁸⁸ James 4:8.

⁸⁹ Tom Smail, A Renewal Recalled in T. Smail, A. Walker A. & N. Wright. *Charismatic Renewal* (London: SPCK, 1993), 14.

⁹⁰ Smail came into an experience of renewal initially through a surprising and powerful healing of one of his flock. He concluded that calling on the name of the Lord was a lesson he partially learned in the healing episode and that this has wider implications.

⁹¹ Joel 2: 32; Acts 2:21 Romans 10:13.

and corporate renewal. In other words, the exposition of conversion is useful for and applied to the issue of a renewal that will create an impetus towards fresh or greater engagement in mission with Jesus. An expanded understanding of conversion⁹² will help inform the need for and the dynamics of renewal. This idea is based on the assumption that conversion is not simply a one-off decisive event.⁹³

Renewal can be understood as a reinvigorated spiritual life brought about by reconnecting with or returning to the LORD. Here the promise of God is fulfilled and actualized in the experience of a believer or community. “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”⁹⁴ Peter’s declaration can be applied to renewal dynamics. “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”⁹⁵ Here the turning⁹⁶ to God, involving repentance and brokenness results in cleansing and restoration.

Scripture expresses conversion as turning or returning to God. “The history of Israel is the story of a people repeatedly being called to conversion.”⁹⁷ Individuals are recorded as turning or returning to God.⁹⁸ But the Old Testament emphasizes the wayward people of God collectively turning to Israel’s covenant God, YHWH. Assyrian

⁹² If conversion is more than a simple, one stop at the cross, “decision for Christ”, but viewed as an ongoing journey of transformation, responding to God, calling on God, repentance and trust – this offers a lens to look at renewal. While conversion may and can happen on the Road to Damascus with dramatic effects – conversion can exhibit a gradualism as on the Road to Emmaus.

⁹³ This is illustrated by the fact that the believer in Jesus can declare, “I am saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved.” The Christian life may be characterized by a crisis that precipitates a journey of transformation.

⁹⁴ James 4:8.

⁹⁵ Acts 3:19.

⁹⁶ επιστρεψατε.

⁹⁷ Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 5.

⁹⁸ David returning to God (Ps. 51) after his adultery with Bathsheba and culpability in her husband’s killing, Naaman (2Ki. 5), Josiah (11Ki. 23:23), and Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:12f) could be cited as individual conversions but the O.T. emphasis is of a collective returning to God.

conversion is recorded⁹⁹ but the overall focus is Israel turning to God in the context of the covenant.

The New Testament call to conversion is issued in the context of the in-breaking Kingdom of God. John baptizer and Jesus both proclaim, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.”¹⁰⁰ John’s ministry, in fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy¹⁰¹ is characterized as a ministry of conversion.¹⁰² Here, John’s call for repentance and righteousness results in reconciliation and the healing of intergenerational relationships. Conversion is multidimensional; it decisively involves a turning or returning to God, hence the prophetic call to “Prepare the way of the LORD.”¹⁰³ This new or renewed vertical, Godward dimension will have horizontal relational results and behavioral implications.¹⁰⁴

N.T. conversion is not only eschatological but also Christocentric. Conversion is to God in Christ, thus conversion is to Jesus. Therefore, renewal will also be Christocentric and thus involve encountering Jesus afresh, and experiencing reignited affection and devotion to Jesus.¹⁰⁵ Conversion is by the sheer grace of God and effected by the Holy Spirit. It is not an end in itself but results in the service of God and humanity.¹⁰⁶ Acts offers a distinctive conversion pattern¹⁰⁷ but this should not be construed as a uniformity of entry into the kingdom. Conversion is decisive. It involves

⁹⁹ Jonah 3:7-10.

¹⁰⁰ Mat. 3:3,17 cf. Mark 1:15.

¹⁰¹ Malachi 4:5-6.

¹⁰² Luke 1:16-17.

¹⁰³ Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 3:1, Matt 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 1:76.

¹⁰⁴ Luke 3:8 ff.

¹⁰⁵ Revelation 2:4.

¹⁰⁶ 1 John 3:16-19.

¹⁰⁷ In the Acts narrative conversion or initiation into the kingdom of God can be identified as a matrix of four elements: faith in Jesus, repentance as a turning from sin and to God, water baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit

people's eyes being opened; it is described as turning "from darkness to light"; it involves a deliverance from "the power of Satan to God", as well as receiving and enjoying the gift of forgiveness and incorporation into those set apart by God for His purposes.¹⁰⁸

While a case can be made for the decisive stepping out of darkness into light in conversion, it should also be seen as ongoing or part of a transformational process.¹⁰⁹

Hirsch asserts, "at the heart of the renewal of the Church in any time or place is going back to Jesus."¹¹⁰ Thus, for a leader or a congregation experiencing renewal it must involve an existential re-centering around Jesus, and fresh devotion to Jesus.

SHUBH is used throughout the Old Testament, primarily addressing Israel. This return involves behavioral change, such as pursuing justice.¹¹¹ It involves a renewal of love for, obedience and loyalty to, and relationship with YHWH, the covenant keeping God. "In the New Testament *SHUBH* is taken up directly by *EPISTREPHEIN* and *METANOEIN* occasionally used side by side."¹¹² In the LXX, *EPISTREPHO* frequently renders *SHUBH*. When used theologically, it conveys the idea of change on turning to God¹¹³. It not only represents the initial turning of unbelievers but also the return to God of wayward believers.¹¹⁴

METANOEO conveys a change of mind. This involves a whole life turning and experience, which is concretely demonstrable in specific areas of one's life.¹¹⁵ It is

¹⁰⁸ Acts 26:18.

¹⁰⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

¹¹⁰ Alan Hirsch at C2C Network Cadre in Vancouver BC, March 12,2013.

¹¹¹ Hosea 12:6.

¹¹² Paul Löffler, The Biblical concept of conversion. Mission Trends No.2 Evangelization, Eds. G.H. Anderson and T.F. Stransky, (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 31.

¹¹³ Acts 14:15, 1 Thessalonians. 1:9.

¹¹⁴ James 5:19-20.

¹¹⁵ Luke 3:10-14, Acts 19:18,19.

distinguishable from remorse¹¹⁶ but may involve regret.¹¹⁷ The idea of metanoia and METANOEO as renewal or transformation of the mind informs renewal theology. This “change of mind” in Scripture always results in behavioral change. This relates to the issue of congregational renewal since it has already been noted that church transformation requires a new operating system. Thus, to experience renewed devotion to Christ and increased missional vigor will require addressing underlying assumptions, beliefs and “mental maps.”

These concepts do not exhaust the Biblical understanding of conversion. No single word or term conveys all that entering the Kingdom of God means. The uses of EPISTREPHO and METANOEO, cited above, point towards an understanding of renewal. The Thessalonians are reminded they turned to God from idolatry.¹¹⁸ The issue of idolatry is pervasive and ongoing in the life of a believer or a local church. Thus, renewal will involve addressing idolatry, both individually in the life of a believer or pastoral leader and corporately in the life of a congregation.

In the New Covenant, this takes on Christological significance. In the light of the gospel, this is reframed as a call to live under the rule and reign of Jesus. The issue of idolatry is addressed by raising the question of that which rivals the centrality and supremacy of Jesus in the life of a believer, a pastor or a congregation. Renewal may involve prayerfully wrestling with that which undermines the rightful rule and reign of Jesus the Rescuer and King both individually and collectively.

That most basic question which God poses to each human heart: "has something or someone besides Jesus the Christ taken title to your heart's functional trust, preoccupation, loyalty, service, fear and delight?" Questions...bring some of

¹¹⁶ 2 Cor. 7:9, 10.

¹¹⁷ Esau wept remorsefully (Heb. 12:16,17) but did not experience METANOIA.

¹¹⁸ 1 Thess. 1:9.

people's idol systems to the surface. 'To who or what do you look for life-sustaining stability, security and acceptance...What do you really want and expect [out of life]? What would [really] make you happy? What would make you an acceptable person? Where do you look for power and success?' These questions or similar ones tease out whether we serve God or idols, whether we look for salvation from Christ or from false saviors.¹¹⁹

Conversion can be described as the work of God. This was Karl Barth's emphasis. The person turning to God is passive. The believer has been diverted from a wrong path by an awakening. This is instigated by a divine jolt, bringing one out of "the sleep of death; the sleep from which there can be no awakening except in the power of the mystery and miracle of God."¹²⁰

This is a vital distinctive and dynamic. Conversion and renewal cannot be simply defined as turning to God. This is one dimension of conversion or renewal. If this view is held singularly or out of balance with renewal as the result of a divine operation, or intervention, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, there is a danger of falling prey to a mechanistic and formulaic understanding of renewal. There is an element of mystery and divine serendipity in congregational renewal. Why does First Church enjoy a palpable sense of God's presence in worship gatherings, special unction in the proclamation of the Word of God, the joy of the LORD, the fruit of life transformation – while Second Church at the other end of the street is characterized by dour and unimaginative gatherings and collective grumpiness? Furthermore, Second Church would need to delve into yesteryear to recount stories of transformation, healing or deliverance. It would be a fatal error for Second Church's ailing leadership to attempt to replicate the ministries and programs at First Church. Jesus spoke of the surprising and unpredictable activity of the

¹¹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods* (New York: Dutton Press, 2009), 170.

¹²⁰ Karl Barth, "The Awakening to Conversion," in *Conversion: Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation*, ed. Walter Conn (New York: Alba House, 1978), 35.

Spirit in conversation with Nicodemus. “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”¹²¹

Guthrie states, “...The believer’s whole spiritual existence depends on the activity of the Holy Spirit. It involves a totally new mode of existence.”¹²² This applies to renewal dynamics, whether individual or corporate. The Holy Spirit is the agent of renewal. Congregational renewal and missional renaissance are a result of the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Lovelace identifies the role of charismatic leadership in the cyclical Old Covenant pattern of apostasy and spiritual renewal.¹²³ Yet he is at pains to stress that renewal is not simply the result of dynamic human leadership:

That is not to say...that the ultimate causative factor in the cycles of revival is spontaneous human initiative. Left to itself, sinful human nature would run downward forever, even among the elect of God, because of the disease of indwelling sin. As Paul intimates in Romans 8:26-27, even prayer itself, the pivotal admission of dependence through which decline begins to turn towards renewal, results from the hidden inspiration of the Spirit.¹²⁴

The Work of the Spirit in Renewal: Renewal as Holy Spirit Encounter

Pawson contends for conversion as “a complex of 4 elements -- repenting towards God, believing in the Lord Jesus, being baptized in water and receiving the Holy Spirit.”¹²⁵ Pawson’s work is remarkable because contemporary evangelicalism typically regards conversion as consisting of only two elements, faith and repentance. Wells has

¹²¹ John 3:8

¹²² Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1981), 527.

¹²³ Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Exeter, England: Paternoster Press, 1979), 61.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 67.

¹²⁵ David Pawson, *The Normal Christian Birth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 11.

no charismatic or pneumatological dimension in conversion.¹²⁶ Stott argues, “Repentance and faith are the twin demands of the gospel...the two together constitute conversion.”¹²⁷

Pawson’s treatment of conversion is helpful in framing a theology of renewal. For Pawson, belief in Christ translates into faithfulness. Thus conversion becomes an ongoing process, this fuels a renewal theology with the need for ongoing renewal. The journey of faith is ongoing, the believer, leader and congregation must live out ongoing faithfulness to the gospel. This cannot be done on the basis of resolve, grit or will power the journey requires the gracious enablement and energy of the Holy Spirit.

Renewal certainly involves believing the gospel afresh, attending to and repenting of neglected truths, and turning from self-sufficiency, sin, unbelief, or idolatry. There is a dimension of renewal that goes beyond the “twin demands” of faith and repentance, however, encountering the Holy Spirit in a fresh way.

Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit exercises a teaching ministry.¹²⁸ He illuminates the Scriptures, leads into “all truth” and empowers realignment with neglected truth. He convicts of sin of righteousness and of judgment to come and reveals our need of righteousness,¹²⁹ a righteousness that is revealed in the gospel.¹³⁰ He thus empowers gospel renewal dynamics. “When the gospel is applied to a heart and a community, it renews—bringing God’s power to vitalize and energize.”¹³¹ The Holy Spirit activates gospel renewal and in so doing, He addresses “...three aberrations from the biblical

¹²⁶ David F. Wells, *Turning to God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 35-44.

¹²⁷ John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon Books, 1975), 117.

¹²⁸ John 14:26

¹²⁹ John 16:8

¹³⁰ Romans 1:16-17

¹³¹ Tim Keller, *Gospel Renewal Dynamics*, Reading 6.1, (New York: City to City, C2C Network, n.d.), 1.

teaching on justification- cheap grace, legalism and moralism –(which) still dominate the church today.”¹³²

Lovelace identifies a significant contemporary need for gospel renewal.

Only a fraction of the present body of professing Christians are solidly appropriating the justifying work of Christ in their lives. Many have so light an apprehension of God’s holiness and of the extent and guilt of their sin that consciously they see little need for justification, although below the surface of their lives they are deeply guilt-ridden and insecure. Many others have a theoretical commitment to this doctrine, but in their day-to-day existence they rely on their sanctification for justification, in the Augustinian manner, drawing their assurance of acceptance with God from their sincerity, their past experience of conversion, their recent religious performance or the relative infrequency of their conscious, willful disobedience. Few know enough to start each day with a thoroughgoing stand upon Luther’s platform: you are accepted, looking outward in faith and claiming the wholly alien righteousness of Christ as the only ground for acceptance, relaxing in that quality of trust which will produce increasing sanctification as faith is active in love and gratitude.¹³³

The Holy Spirit is God the Guide. This function in renewal is significant because “Only by the Holy Spirit guiding us can we understand the Bible and then experience the joy of the Holy Spirit.”¹³⁴ This is a vital for believers who are stuck in a cognitive faith or dry doctrinaire congregations – to be ignited by a fresh revelation of God’s timeless truth.

The Holy Spirit brings an experiential awareness of the love and affection of God into the heart of the believer.¹³⁵ A significant dimension of renewal is the immersion a leader or believer in the love of God and at a congregational level, a company of people, together, being brought into a fuller revelation of the love of God. “A church in which healing, renewal and effective evangelism can happen is a church that is open to receive Christ’s Calvary love, to demonstrate it in specific ways in the relationships of its

¹³² Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 100.

¹³³ Ibid., 101.

¹³⁴ R.T. Kendall, *Holy Fire* (Lakeland: Charisma House, 2014), 22.

¹³⁵ Romans 5:5.

members to one another, and to extend it to those outside with whom it comes in contact.”¹³⁶

Reimer indicates that this experience of the love of God is foundational. “Seek God for whispers where the Spirit tells you that you are loved by God. And seek God for encounters where the Spirit pours out the love of God in your heart.”¹³⁷

The Holy Spirit empowers the people of God for mission. This is an emphasis in the Johannine commission¹³⁸ where in an anticipation of the Pentecostal infusion of Holy Spirit life and power Jesus breathed on his disciples and exhorted them to receive the Holy Spirit. Spirit empowerment is a significant Lucan emphasis.¹³⁹ In Luke-Acts the primitive Jesus movement saw kingdom advancement as Spirit saturated agents of Jesus’ mission, continuing “all that Jesus began to do and to teach”¹⁴⁰.

The Spirit delights in exalting Jesus. He has a spotlight agenda ensuring that Jesus is held in high honor on center stage.¹⁴¹ Thus a renewing Holy Spirit encounter will be Christocentric. At the same time, the work of the Spirit in renewal will be crucicentric. As Smail asserts, “The way to Pentecost is Calvary; the Spirit comes from the cross.”¹⁴² He also raises a caution, noting “the dangers that beset us when our claims to experience of the Spirit are not related in the closest possible way to God’s final and normative revelation of himself in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.”¹⁴³

¹³⁶ Tom Smail, *Charismatic Renewal*, 63.

¹³⁷ Rob Reimer, *Pathways to the King* (Franklin: Carpenter’s Son Publishing, 2013), 45.

¹³⁸ John 20:19-23.

¹³⁹ Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31 etc.

¹⁴⁰ Acts 1:1.

¹⁴¹ John 16:14.

¹⁴² Smail, *Charismatic Renewal*, 55.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 56.

Renewal as a Deeper Experience of the Love and Power of God

Paul prays¹⁴⁴ that the Ephesian believers experience power, boldness and love.

The focus of the earnest and intense prayer is that these believers are strengthened and that the love of God is actualized in their experience, that somehow they may know in greater measure the incomparable love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

The Spirit of God can make the love of God so spiritually real and affecting that it changes how we live. He wants us not to know the fact of Christ's love but to have the power to grasp the infinity and wonder of it (Ephesians 3:18-19). This is what happens when the fullness of the Spirit is mentioned. The truth begins to shine out to us. We hear in our hearts, "you are my child" (see Romans 8:16; cf. Luke 3:22) and it makes us effective as ambassadors of the kingdom.¹⁴⁵

Here, Reimer frames a significant expectation regarding authentic renewal.

Renewal leads to a measure of transformation and some expression of deeper missional engagement. This is true because the God who is encountered anew is the sending God who has a mission." "To know God is to change, and to be saved by him implies a commitment to live a life consistent with who he is."¹⁴⁶ It can be added that to be renewed by God implies a fresh commitment to love him, obey him and participate in *missio Dei*.

Leadership

Christian leadership is a dynamic process whereby the leader, committed to following Jesus, exercises redemptive and transforming influence over a group of people in a Christ honoring way towards a God inspired vision.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴⁵ Timothy Keller, *Center Church*, 59.

¹⁴⁶ Hirsch & Ketchum, *Permanent Revolution*, 144.

¹⁴⁷ This definition is my own construct.

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is ...leadership, let him govern diligently.”¹⁴⁸ This Scripture reveals that a man or woman may exercise leadership as an expression of a spiritual endowment and that leaders may operate at different capacity levels.¹⁴⁹

Leadership plays a critical role in renewal. Lovelace explores both cyclical renewal as seen in the Old Testament and continuous renewal as a paradigm seen in Acts. While God takes the initiative as the Initiator and Igniter of renewed faith and devotion in the life of a congregation; leadership is pivotal. Reflecting on the cyclical pattern of renewal and decline in Judges and the cry for deliverance in Exodus.¹⁵⁰ Lovelace offers the sobering insight that in any renewal, God’s appointed leader has a foundational role.

“It appears that a general principle concerning the deliverance of God’s people is being hinted at here: redemption comes under the direction of leaders whom God raises up in his sovereign mercy in response to the deep longing and intercession of the laity generated under the pressure of defeat or suffering.”¹⁵¹

Lovelace argues that the cyclical pattern of renewal and decline cannot simply be limited to Judges but is seen in the records of the monarchy. Here, there is a dynamic interplay between the king and the people – the leader and the followers. He comments,

At first glance it seems that under the monarchy the disposition of the king rather than the heart attitude of the people is the main determinant in the upward or downward movement of the cycles.” He traces kings such as Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah leading the people into sin and idolatry as well as stirring up

¹⁴⁸ Romans 12:6-8.

¹⁴⁹ Note Romans 12:6 where Paul states: “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it *in proportion to his faith*.” We can conclude that the operation of spiritual gifts is not only an expression of God’s grace but that prophetic gift operates in relation to the faith of the one exercising that gift. In other words, those with the prophetic anointing can operate with different prophetic capacities. This leads me to my conclusion that the leadership anointing will manifest it in variant degrees and therefore that leaders will function with different capacities.

¹⁵⁰ Exodus 3:7-9.

¹⁵¹ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 65.

fresh spiritual faithfulness, as evidence of this. He does, however, concede “At other times when kings sought for a return to God, the people failed to respond (2 Kings 12:1-21).¹⁵²

Lovelace’s concession notwithstanding, the challenge remains that a leader seeking corporate renewal must pursue personal renewal. The renaissance leader must fundamentally attend to his or her own heart¹⁵³ and stir up their own affections for Christ and devotion to God. Here, uniquely and particularly, a leader cannot take someone where they themselves have not gone or entered into.

What follows next is a discussion of missional leadership and how APEST leadership or fivefold ministry serves and supports the mission of God. Of particular interest is apostolic leadership as a catalyst for gospel renewal and missional impulse.

Missional Leadership

Jesus as the Paradigmatic Missional Leader

Jesus is the missional leader par excellence. Jesus offers an enduring model of servant leadership¹⁵⁴ and missional engagement.¹⁵⁵ Three Scriptural episodes are explored here which point to Jesus as the model for mission.

Learning from Luke

In Luke 4:14-30 at his Nazareth homecoming Jesus offers clues for the dynamics and foundations for missional leadership. Bosch identifies three distinct Lucan emphases

¹⁵² Ibid., 65.

¹⁵³ Proverbs 4:23.

¹⁵⁴ Mark 10:45; John 13:1-17. See especially John 13:15 where Jesus is explicit that his actions are an example to follow.

¹⁵⁵ John 20:21.

in the Nazareth Manifesto: the centrality of the poor in Jesus' ministry, the setting aside of vengeance, and mission to the Gentiles.¹⁵⁶

Prior to this episode which is highly significant for Luke, we discover that at his baptism,¹⁵⁷ Jesus is launched into his mission by the love, affirmation and affection of his Father. It seems that his validation by the Father, his experience of being declared the apple of the Father's eye buoyed him in the face of opposition. His Nazareth manifesto¹⁵⁸, is applied to not only Israel but the Gentiles. Jesus' application of his cut and paste of Isaiah 58 and Isaiah 61 involved challenging the prevalent nationalistic exclusivism.¹⁵⁹ This created a firestorm resulting in an attempt to execute him for blasphemy.¹⁶⁰ Jesus responds to this plot with poise.¹⁶¹ How was this possible? Jesus was clear in His identity as the Beloved Son of the Father, something that was subject to satanic assault, with the repeated "If you are the Son of God..."¹⁶²

Jesus reminds us here that before a leader can be awakened to missional engagement the leader must be awakened to the love and affection of the Father. A missional leader will derive their identity and sense of value from what they do at their peril. The pursuit of Jesus and his mission must be a response to the love of God, fueled and sustained by the love of God.¹⁶³

Jesus only embarked on mission after he was anointed by the Holy Spirit; after the Spirit descended upon him.¹⁶⁴ Luke offers a unique pneumatological perspective and

¹⁵⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89.

¹⁵⁷ Luke 3:21-22.

¹⁵⁸ Luke 4:18-19.

¹⁵⁹ Luke 4:27-28.

¹⁶⁰ Luke 4:28-29.

¹⁶¹ Luke 4:30.

¹⁶² Luke 4:1-13.

¹⁶³ 2 Corinthians 5:14.

¹⁶⁴ Luke 3:22.

concern. Luke records unequivocally that Jesus exercised his transformative ministry as a direct result of Holy Spirit empowerment.¹⁶⁵

As Jesus goes public and announces his kingdom manifesto, Luke emphasizes the Son's relationship with the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁶ He also records that, "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside."¹⁶⁷

Jesus declares as both a Messianic self-designation and as an existential reality in his own life," the Spirit of the Lord is on me," and "he has anointed me."¹⁶⁸ Jesus is declaring that he is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. In His Person and in his ministry he is and will be the fulfillment of Isaiah's messianic dream. "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."¹⁶⁹ Luke has unique language to describe the baptism in the Holy Spirit or a power encounter with the Spirit," coming upon" or "coming on."¹⁷⁰ Jesus as the eternal uncreated Son of God become fully human was: fully human as if he was not God and fully God as if he was not human, at the same time without contradiction. He is Immanuel, yet the Son does not embark on mission until the Spirit of God comes upon him. He did not conduct his mission in the raw power of his Godhood¹⁷¹ but out of an overflow of communion with His Father and out of dependency on the leadership, guidance, power and presence of the Holy Spirit. If the Son of God walked in the power of the Spirit and did not execute his mission until anointed by the Spirit; how much more the leader who wants to effect congregational

¹⁶⁵ Acts 10:38.

¹⁶⁶ Luke 4:1.

¹⁶⁷ Luke 4:14.

¹⁶⁸ Luke 4:18.

¹⁶⁹ Luke 4:23.

¹⁷⁰ Acts 1:4-5; Acts 1:8; Acts 8:16; Acts 10:44-48 especially Acts 10:44.

¹⁷¹ Philippians 2:5-11.

change and missional renewal? Jesus is led into mission by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit for mission and he instructs his followers to live in the same dynamic.¹⁷²

As a missional leader, Jesus had a clear agenda.¹⁷³ He reveals his passion for outsiders even when it provokes life threatening hostility and opposition. He is for the lost, the last, the little and the least. He has a heart for outcasts, outsiders and outliers. There is a quadruple emphasis on proclamation here, reminding the missional leader who would follow Jesus that there must be a proper confidence in the gospel. Jesus comes to evangelize the poor. Jesus comes to proclaim freedom for the captives. Jesus comes to proclaim recovery of sight for the blind. Jesus comes to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus and Sustaining Spirituality

In John 15 Jesus invites his followers to fruitfulness that comes from abiding in him.¹⁷⁴ Brown contends that John 15:1-6 consists of a *masal*, a kind of parable which is explained and expounded on in John 15:7-17.¹⁷⁵ Jesus exhorts his disciples "remain in me."¹⁷⁶

"Remain in ... remaining on, these translations represent the same Greek expression *menein en* which is used 10 times in verses 4-10. It is most difficult to find a consistent translation suitable to the relations both between a vine and its branches and

¹⁷² See the emphasis on waiting until empowered in Luke 24:49 & Acts 1:4-8.

¹⁷³ Luke 4:18-19.

¹⁷⁴ John 15:1-17.

¹⁷⁵ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, (Garden City: Double Day, 1970), xiii-xxi.

¹⁷⁶ John 15:4.

Jesus and his disciples. The branches are to remain on the vine and the disciples are to remain in Jesus.”¹⁷⁷

It is clear that the emphasis here from Jesus is to “abide” or “remain in him” and that this is the priority that precedes any possibility of missional fruitfulness.¹⁷⁸

Remaining in Jesus and having Jesus remain in the disciple are parts of the whole, for there is only one personal relationship between Jesus and His disciples: if they remain in Jesus through faith, he remains in them through love and fruitfulness. That is why verses 4 and 5 insist that in order to bear fruit one must remain in Jesus; all who remain in Jesus bear fruit and only those.¹⁷⁹

The emphasis is the disciple’s and thus the missional leader’s total dependency on Jesus. This is spelled out categorically by Jesus in his totalizing statement,” apart from me you can do nothing.”¹⁸⁰ The first order of business for the disciple is to cultivate a deepening relationship with Jesus, remaining in or abiding in Jesus in a relationship characterized by love and trust and dependency. “To “remain” in Jesus has a deeper significance than simply to continue to believe in him, although it includes that; it connotes continuing to live in association or union with him. Meinate (aorist tense) could signify “step into union with me.”¹⁸¹

The Johannine Commission¹⁸²

John offers a portrait of Jesus as walking in his identity as the beloved Son of the Father, fully cognizant of His sent-ness and attentive to the heart and voice and agenda of His Father. Regarding the latter dynamic, John records Jesus saying: “the Son can do

¹⁷⁷ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 660-661.

¹⁷⁸ John 15:2 & 15:16.

¹⁷⁹ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 678.

¹⁸⁰ John 15:5.

¹⁸¹ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John: Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 272.

¹⁸² John 20:19-23.

nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.”¹⁸³ And, “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”¹⁸⁴

Jesus’ mission flows of his intimate relationship with His Father and is fueled by communion with His Father. Jesus repeatedly communicates his awareness that he is not only loved by his Father but also sent by his Father.¹⁸⁵ Mission involves “participation in the Son’s sent-ness by the Spirit of God.”¹⁸⁶

Here, in John 20, “The mission of the Son has not finished with his “lifting up” to heaven. “As the Father has sent me” implies a sending in the past that continues to hold good in the present. Such is the force of the Greek perfect tense.”¹⁸⁷

The special Johannine contribution to the theology of this mission is that the Father’s sending of the Son serves both as the model and the ground for the Son’s sending of his disciples. Their mission is to continue the Son’s mission; and this requires that the Son must be present to them during his mission... This becomes possible only through the gift of the Holy Spirit (v.22) whom the Father sends in Jesus’ name (14:26) and whom Jesus Himself sends (15:26).¹⁸⁸

Jesus commissioning of the disciples is followed by an impartation of the Holy Spirit.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸⁹

This “harks back to Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:9-10.”¹⁹⁰ There is debate and disagreement regarding how to understand¹⁹¹, synthesize or reconcile the John 20 out-

¹⁸³ John 5:18-19.

¹⁸⁴ John 8:28-29.

¹⁸⁵ John 5:36-38; John 6:44; John 8:16; John 17:18 offer examples of Jesus’ missional self-consciousness.

¹⁸⁶ Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 271-284.

¹⁸⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 379.

¹⁸⁸ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1086.

¹⁸⁹ John 20:22

breathing¹⁹² of the Spirit with the Acts 2 Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit. Morris remarks, “the relation of this gift to that made on the day of Pentecost is obscure. Some scholars maintain that the two are incompatible.”¹⁹³ Hoskyns draws a distinction between the two Holy Spirit encounters. He views the Johannine account as preparatory for the sending of the Holy Spirit by the ascended Christ in Acts 2.¹⁹⁴

In light of the circumstances of the Johannine and Lucan accounts of the giving of the Holy Spirit being entirely different, Morris contends:

It is false alike to the New Testament and to Christian experience to maintain there is but one gift of the Spirit. Rather the Spirit continually manifest Himself in new ways. Subsequent to the gift at Pentecost the Spirit fell on all who heard the word in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44), just as “on us at the beginning” (Acts 11:15). On several occasions believers are said to have “been filled with the Holy Spirit” (E.G. Acts 4:8,31: 9:17;13:9; cf. Rom 5:5;1 Cor.2:12 etc.) where the aorist indicates new activities of the Spirit rather than a reference to what had already been the case. John tells of one gift and Luke another.¹⁹⁵

Morris not only offers an exegetical solution he presents the primary issue: mission in Jesus’ Name and Jesus’ way requires Holy Spirit empowerment. Not only that but attentiveness and openness to fresh activities of the Spirit and new Holy Spirit encounters. The disciple and the missional leader must live in dependency on the Spirit and join the old Puritan prayer, “LORD, give us fresh baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

John presents the power for mission here and in the conclusion of John 20, when the disenfranchised Thomas abandons himself to Jesus in adoration with the exclamation,

¹⁹⁰ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1047.

¹⁹¹ John Calvin, for example, suggested that the release of the Holy Spirit should be viewed as a sprinkling and Pentecost as a downpour.

¹⁹² This is the singular use in all of the N.T. of ἐνεφυσήσεν.

¹⁹³ Leon Morris, *Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: NICNT, Eerdmans, 1995), 747.

¹⁹⁴ Sir Edwin Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 547.

¹⁹⁵ Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 748.

“My God and my LORD! “Thomas presents the authority for mission; Jesus Himself. His words are,” the supreme Christological pronouncement of the Fourth Gospel.”¹⁹⁶

Jesus commissions his followers as Spirit breathed upon heralds of forgiveness, and to embark on mission the way he has done so. And as the resurrected Lord of Life who shows his scars to the disciples, this is an invitation to brokenness and to follow him in the way of the cross.

The Johannine Commission is a call to open the doors of the safe house and active engagement in the world. “The Church is recognized as the bearer of the Kingdom, the presence of the Kingdom, insofar as it is marked by the scars of the Passion. And the Passion of Jesus is not passive submission to evil but the price paid for an active challenge to evil.”¹⁹⁷

The call to mission is costly. Jesus not only issues an incarnational mandate, to give up home field advantage as he did,¹⁹⁸ but to become broken, vulnerable and dependent and to lose one’s life for his sake¹⁹⁹ and the sake of his kingdom. Here Jesus calls for servanthood, sacrifice and surrender. The missional leader who follows Jesus faithfully on mission and influences others towards mission will not do so by exerting power, but will do so like Jesus from the place of surrender²⁰⁰ and like Thomas from the place of adoration and abandonment.²⁰¹

In addition to this, Jesus as Mission Leader not only embarks on mission but equips and deploys others for mission. He invests deeply in The Twelve and releases

¹⁹⁶ Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1087.

¹⁹⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 57.

¹⁹⁸ John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11.

¹⁹⁹ John 12:24-26.

²⁰⁰ Luke 22:42.

²⁰¹ John 20:28.

them on mission.²⁰² Jesus deploys the 72 on mission, empowering them to speak his words, and to heal the sick, bring shalom, and drive out demons.²⁰³ Jesus reproduces himself in the 72. He is a multiplying leader who extends his influence by investing in, authorizing and deploying others. This too will be the mark of a renaissance leader.

APEST and Missional Leadership

Mission is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit is expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.²⁰⁴

To fruitfully participate in this missional movement requires missional leadership.

What follows is a discussion of how the fivefold ministry of Ephesians 4 can serve and support missional engagement. Of particular relevance is apostolic gifting with its unique capacities for sparking missional imagination and engagement. God gives spiritual gifts to equip Christ followers on mission and to build up the body of Christ.²⁰⁵ Spiritual gifts are distributed sovereignly by the Holy Spirit²⁰⁶ to serve others.²⁰⁷ The gifts are distributed as expressions of the grace of God, this is his undeserved kindness and generosity. Fruitful service for Jesus comes out of the disciple or leader honoring his or her gifts. The charismatic gifts are places of guaranteed power from heaven to do God’s work on the earth. A leader functioning in their gifting will experience the flow of Holy

²⁰² Luke 9:1-6.

²⁰³ Luke 10:1-20.

²⁰⁴ Bosch., *Transforming Mission*, 390.

²⁰⁵ Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

²⁰⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:11.

²⁰⁷ 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Spirit power. Conversely if the gifting is stifled or suppressed or a leader operates beyond their spiritual gifting, frustration will follow.

The five gifts of Jesus, APEST²⁰⁸, are foundational for the healthy functioning of a Jesus community and its spiritual vitality and missional potency. Ephesians offers us Paul's constitutional ecclesiology and the fivefold ministry given by Jesus to his church is foundational for the functioning and flourishing of the church. The ascended triumphant Christ as Conqueror has the capacity to bestow gifts on his people, and he has done so! Jesus has given his church the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd and teacher. These can be characterized as sodalic and modalic leadership gifts.

Not only does Ephesians 4:1-16 point us to a dynamic manifestation of ecclesia, but it implies that there can be no lasting effectiveness to the church's mission without the fully functioning ministry that Jesus has once-for-all "given" (v.7) to his people. We are called to be the fullness of Jesus in the world, and according to Paul's logic in Ephesians 4:1-16 we achieve this not through the two-fold shepherd-teacher model of ministry and leadership that we have become used to, but through this fivefold, equipping approach.²⁰⁹

Hirsch, above points to a pernicious problem that has plagued contemporary Western and North American church life, namely the elevation of shepherds and teachers and the concomitant sidelining and suppression of the APE gifts. For example, Stott comments, "I sometimes urge my charismatic friends...some of whom seem to me to be preoccupied with the less important gifts, to remember Paul's dictum "earnestly to desire the higher gifts,"²¹⁰ and to consider whether these are not the teaching gifts. It is teaching, which builds up the church."²¹¹ It is teachers who are needed most."²¹²

²⁰⁸ Apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd and teacher – see Ephesians 4:7-11.

²⁰⁹ J.R. Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture* (Downers Grove: VP/Praxis, 2012), 13.

²¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:31.

²¹¹ Here Stott ignores Scriptures that prophecy builds up the church – see 1 Corinthians 14:3 where Paul contends for, in a context of charismatic excess, not the prohibition of prophecy which strengthens and builds up – but its pursuit (1 Cor.14: 39) – he also makes a case that a message in tongues with an interpretation has the same fortifying effect as a prophetic utterance (1 Cor.14: 5).

Here the late evangelical statesman expresses this persistent imbalance. Nowhere in Scripture is teaching elevated above any other spiritual gift. Indeed, Stott, woefully, if not willfully, ignores the apostolic exhortation, “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.”²¹³ The church to her detriment has largely organized herself around two gifts, shepherd and teacher, this has resulted in a cerebral and internally focused expression of the faith lacking in missional potency.²¹⁴ Furthermore, this fosters a cerebral faith that downplays or dismisses the revelatory and activating capacities of the prophetic. This can lead to an evangelical faith that is, according to Lloyd-Jones, “perfectly orthodox, and perfectly useless.”²¹⁵ If the teacher gift is elevated to Stott’s singular prominence, the church becomes a lecture theater. This is in no way to diminish the priority of expounding, attending to and obeying Scripture. Jesus deemed obedience to his teaching as one of the marks of authentic discipleship.²¹⁶

It may be argued, contrary to Stott’s assertions that, in light of the apostle being listed first in all the lists of gifts and ministries²¹⁷ it is the most important. Not because of an elevated status, as if apostolic leadership sits atop a charismatic hierarchy, but because of its foundational nature. The church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone”²¹⁸.

²¹² John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 164.

²¹³ 1 Corinthians 14:1.

²¹⁴ This prevalent evangelical tendency to ignore apostles, sideline prophets and suppress evangelists was in evidence at Lausanne III in Cape Town. Plenary sessions were given to expositions of, and small group engagement with Ephesians. The exposition of Ephesians 4 completely ignored fivefold ministry and APEs and the fact that the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).

²¹⁵ R.T. Kendall, *Holy Fire* (Lake Mary: Charisma House, 2014), 73.

²¹⁶ See Matthew 7:24-29 & John 8:31.

²¹⁷ See 1 Corinthians 12:28ff and Ephesians 4:11.

²¹⁸ Ephesians 2:20.

Breen categorizes fivefold ministry²¹⁹ as pioneers and settlers. Pioneers are the apostles, prophets and evangelists that “enjoy change...love breakthroughs and are always looking for the next frontier to explore and tame.” “In contrast, settlers, who are the pastors and teachers are committed to continuity, stability and conservation.”²²⁰ Both pioneers and settlers are required. The pioneers blaze new trails and establish new works and settlers are required to build on and stabilize the pioneering work to create something that is lasting. If a ministry moved from stability to ossification, a pioneer or sodalic leader is required to re-establish fresh missional imagination, impulse and engagement. The apostolic vision of gospel expansion is called for in reviving the missionary heart of an ossified body of people. Paul expresses this gospel pioneer spirit.²²¹

Of particular interest here are the more generative and adaptive gifts of apostle, prophet and evangelist. And specifically the role of apostolic leadership in sparking gospel advance and missional movement is our focus. The Church of Jesus must identify, affirm and release apostolic leadership to fulfill her mission of making disciples and multiplication. Hirsch comments: “Quite simply, a missional church needs missional leadership and it is going to take more than the traditional pastor-teacher mode of leadership to pull this off.”²²²

²¹⁹ Ephesians 4:11-12.

²²⁰ Mike Breen & Walt Kallestad, *Passionate Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2005), 150.

²²¹ Romans 15:20.

²²² JR, Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture* (Downers Grove: IVP/Praxis, 2012), 113.

APEST: An Overview

Apostles as “sent ones”, call and equip the church to live out her sent-ness.

Apostles are catalysts for participation in advancing God’s kingdom. Apostles exhibit “contagious empowerment”²²³ They are spiritual kick-starters who initiate ministries and display entrepreneurial leadership. They act as DNA guardians and custodians of the gospel and are passionate about gospel centrality. Apostles advance the gospel. They are “dream awakeners.”²²⁴

Rightly understood, apostles are often looking for new places and new people to advance Christianity and spread God’s reign. If the apostolic gift has primacy, it is as the preeminent pioneering gift that blazes new trails for others to follow. As such, this role is uniquely wired by God to read the culture better than others and to see open doors where others see brick walls (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 16:7-9; 2 Corinthians 2:12).²²⁵

McNeal has modified²²⁶ his vocabulary from “apostolic leadership” to “apostolic-era leadership.”²²⁷ He presses for “A.D. 30 Leadership” kingdom oriented leadership that will signal a shift from leadership that is “institutional, maintenance-oriented, positional, pastoral, church-focused and highly controlling.”²²⁸ He claims that “Apostolic leaders in the New Testament found ways to release people for ministry.”²²⁹ These leaders are empowering “apostolic producer types” rather than micromanaging “director types.”²³⁰

Prophets bring revelation of the heart and mind of God. Prophets are dialed into the will of God and bring a revelation of God’s will. They are truth tellers with a passion

²²³ Neil Cole, *Primal Fire* (Carol Stream: Tyndale Momentum, 2014) 137ff.

²²⁴ JR Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture* (Downers Grove: IVP/Praxis, 2012), 123 ff.

²²⁵ Cole, *Primal Fire*, 141.

²²⁶ His sensitivity to other peoples’ theological sensitivities and tribal distinctive by changing the label has not however caused him to shift from affirming apostolic function and the need for apostolic leadership especially in missional innovation and renewal!

²²⁷ Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009), 131.

²²⁸ Ibid., 131.

²²⁹ Ibid., 140.

²³⁰ Ibid., 139-140.

for God’s heart, holiness, and justice. Prophets are fueled by a passion for God and for his will to be honored and accomplished. Prophets are uniquely attuned to the voice of God and have a peculiar sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. The prophetic can bring directional and spiritual clarity. “Because prophets are very sensitive to God, they tend to see what is happening in the spiritual realm more clearly than most.”²³¹ The prophetic can be catalytic for the release of charismatic gifts.²³² The prophetic can fuel the missional impulse.²³³ It seems that ministry gifting was imparted to or activated in Timothy through a prophetic word spoken over him. Hence, Paul’s exhortation to his mentee, “Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.”²³⁴

Evangelists are recruiters who love the gospel, love sharing good news, and love lost people. Cole claims, “The evangelistic gifting is the recruiting engine of the church.”²³⁵ They embody “contagious compassion”²³⁶ especially for those “without hope and without God in the world.”²³⁷ Evangelists have a heart for those far from God. Evangelists are “story tellers”²³⁸ not because they are raconteurs, although evangelists are frequently great at story telling. The heart of an evangelist is fixed on and stirred by the story of God and sharing it with broken people in a broken world.

An evangelist is a person with a special gift from the Holy Spirit to announce the good news... Methods may differ according to the evangelist’s opportunity and calling, but the central truth remains: an evangelist has been called and especially

²³¹ Cole, *Primal Fire*, 166.

²³² 1 Timothy 1:18.

²³³ Acts 13:1-3.

²³⁴ 1 Timothy 4:14.

²³⁵ Cole, *Primal Fire*, 184.

²³⁶ Ibid., 175ff.

²³⁷ Ephesians 2:12.

²³⁸ Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture*, 143.

equipped by God to declare the gospel to those who have not accepted it, with the goal of challenging them to turn to Christ in repentance and faith.²³⁹

The evangelist carries a burden.” It isn’t a stewardship of the evangelistic gift; it is a stewardship of the Good News itself that compels the true evangelist.”²⁴⁰

Evangelists are people persons in a unique way with a unique attractiveness or winsomeness. Cole remarks,” When others encounter an evangelist, they feel loved, and that tends to make them open to the gospel message. Though no two evangelists are exactly alike, I have yet to meet one who isn’t great with people and most at home in the midst of others.”²⁴¹

Shepherds are nurturers and protectors who are concerned with reconciliation and relational and spiritual health. They demonstrate spiritual and holistic care and a heart for unity. They can be understood as “...pastors, or soul healers (who), help us work through past hurts and pursue wholeness, not just individually but in the context of community.”²⁴² Shepherds tend or take care of the sheep; they cultivate community, build team and function out of relational authority.²⁴³

Teachers love the Scriptures and passing on the Word’s wealth of wisdom. Teachers have a capacity to understand the Scriptures and explain the Scriptures. They want God’s people to encounter God in His Word and to be immersed in Scripture. Radio programs like “Insight for Living,” “Walk in the Word” and “Truth for Life” express the heart of a teacher. The teacher wants to see the people of God become a learning community. Teachers don’t simply download doctrinal data. They invite an encounter

²³⁹ Billy Graham, *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists* (Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1984), 6.

²⁴⁰ Cole, *Primal Fire*, 178.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 179.

²⁴² Ibid., 151.

²⁴³ Ibid., 194-195.

with the Word behind the Word, the LORD of the Scriptures. They are “light givers, (who) shed light on the text and help us understand it in a life-giving and liberating way.”²⁴⁴

Woodward labels these gifts, “equippers”.²⁴⁵ The leaders endowed with one of these gifts, or even a gift-mix²⁴⁶, will not be solely concerned with exercising their own gift. The leaders will invest in the resourcing and releasing of others into ministry. Each gift has a unique “focal concern” and “telos” or “destination mark.” The APEST focal concerns are respectively: living out our calling, pursuing God’s shalom, incarnating the good news, seeking wholeness and holiness, and inhabiting the sacred text.

Each leadership gift contributes to missional health in a unique way through a distinct destination mark. The apostle contributes through creating a discipleship ethos and calling people to participate in advancing God’s kingdom. The prophet’s telos is calling the church to God’s new social order and standing with the poor and oppressed. The evangelist’s contribution is about proclaiming the good news and living with redemptive intentionality. The shepherd or pastor offers a destination mark of cultivating life-giving spirituality within community and embodying reconciliation. The teacher’s telos is about immersion in Scripture and faithfully living in God’s story.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture*, 161.

²⁴⁵ He takes his cue from Ephesians 4:12.

²⁴⁶ In a gift mix a leader has a primary, secondary, and tertiary gifts. An EA is an apostolic evangelist where the gift of evangelist is primary and dominant, a TP similarly is a prophetic teacher.

²⁴⁷ Woodward, *Creating A Missional Culture*, 180.

Apostolic Leadership Dimensions

An apostle as a “sent one” is an envoy who is the personal representative of the one sending him or her. As with each APEST leadership gift, the apostle brings unique capacities to the body of Christ and cause of Christ.

Hirsch contends that the apostle functions “as the custodian of Apostolic Genius and of the gospel itself.”²⁴⁸ The apostle not only guards the potencies of Apostolic Genius or mDNA²⁴⁹ - the apostolic leader triggers the release of these dynamics. These elements together create unique spiritual potency and contribute to movement dynamics. Hirsch defines six simple, interrelating elements that form a symbiotic structure which, together, form Apostolic Genius.

These are: Jesus is LORD- the claim of one God over every aspect of life; Disciple Making; Missional-Incarnational Impulse; Apostolic Environment; Organic Systems

(I.E. The appropriate structures for metabolic growth) and, finally, Communitas-Not Community.²⁵⁰ Thus apostolic leadership sparks missional mojo in a pioneering context or as in this project, an established context, where the apostolic leader ignites movement through missional inertia. The apostle functions as a missional Activator.²⁵¹

The apostles spur the people of God to live out their sent-ness both collectively and individually. The apostle acts as a guardian of the missional (going out) and

²⁴⁸ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 153.

²⁴⁹ mDNA is an abbreviation for missional DNA and describes the elements that require activation for missional potency to be manifested.

²⁵⁰ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 24-25.

²⁵¹ Tom Rath, *Strength Finders 2.0* (New York, Gallup Press, 2007), 41-44. Where Rath offers an exposition of “Activator.” This is one of fifty signature strengths in this personality profile. The Activator can transform innovative ideas into immediate action, has the capacity to create plans that get things moving and to spur others into action, is tenacious, and can energize the plans and ideas of others. Can be intimidating and perceived as a, “ready, fire aim, person.”

incarnational (going deep) impulses of the church.²⁵² For missional renewal, the first order of business may be the establishing or re-establishing of a clear Christology and the purity of the gospel. The apostle is a steward of the “mysteries of God.”²⁵³ This stewardship and guardianship of the gospel is evidenced in Paul calling the Corinthians back to what was of first importance, the gospel.²⁵⁴ Thus the apostle, calling the people of God back to the gospel with its power has a unique function in the ongoing missional renewal of the church. The apostle is anointed by God to be an agent of renewal.”

Apostolic ministry is not just about founding new churches and movements; it is as much about the renewal of existing organizations, that is helping the church retain its primal movemental nature and stay vibrant.”²⁵⁵ Here the apostolic gift can be expressed in the strategic reframing and recalibration of the church in the downturns or plateaus of the organizational life cycle. The apostle exhibits a pioneering spirit and a heart for the expansion of the kingdom.²⁵⁶ The apostle is a builder and architect that does not want to build on someone else’s foundation.²⁵⁷ The apostle is a builder, planter, and a bridge into new setting and cultures.

In calling the people of God back to the gospel, the apostle sparks renewal and transformation because real, life giving power is inherent in the gospel itself; the gospel is “the power of God”.²⁵⁸ In missional renewal, the apostolic role, with its entrepreneurial bias, will serve the church in rediscovering spiritual vibrancy and reengaging with the mission.

²⁵² Hirsch & Catchim, *Permanent Revolution*, 60.

²⁵³ 1 Corinthians 4:1.

²⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4.

²⁵⁵ Hirsch & Catchim, *Permanent Revolution*, 146.

²⁵⁶ Romans 15:14-29; note especially verses 20 & 23 where the trailblazing voice of the apostle is heard.

²⁵⁷ Romans 15:20.

²⁵⁸ Romans 1:16.

Their role as “re/founders” where “genuine apostolic people are radical traditionalists; they operate from the central core of ideas and radically but consistently reapply these ideas in different contexts.”²⁵⁹ As the radical traditionalist in residence, the apostolic leader mediates systemic renewal.²⁶⁰ With their architectural and design capacities and biases and their concern for the advancement of Christianity on new turf, the apostle constantly agitates the whole organizational system towards renewal.

As those with “oversight of the missional cause” the apostles “keep up the pressure of missional advancement by virtue of their calling.”²⁶¹ The apostle therefore has the capacities and spiritual potencies to catalyze a culture shift. The apostolic calling will consistently express itself in the desire for innovation for the sake of the gospel, recalibration around the gospel, re-founding, reframing, restructuring the organization to live mission true will be part of the agitation brought to bear by the apostle. For these reasons the apostle is uniquely gifted by God to spark a tired or dysfunctional congregation with fresh gospel faithfulness and missional imagination. The apostle, of all the generative gifts, contains the capacities to spark a fresh move towards going out, planting the gospel and advancing the mission.

Conclusions

Living in the Light of God’s Call

A leader does not volunteer for mission but is apprehended by the LORD of the harvest, and lives in the light of being summoned²⁶² and being chosen by the LORD.²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Hirsch & Catchim, *Permanent Revolution*, 200.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 200.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 200.

²⁶² Matthew 4:19.

The renaissance leader ought to step into the fray of change dynamics with a sense of being summoned from above.²⁶⁴ The point leader not only must be able to articulate a call, and a sense of sent-ness, but find the call of God to be a sustaining fuel in the white water rafting of church change.

Attentiveness to and dependency on the Holy Spirit

The renaissance leader ought to lead as he is led by the Holy Spirit²⁶⁵ The posture of the leader must be one of dependency and listening. Discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit on the change pathway is vital.²⁶⁶

A vital union with Jesus and sustaining spirituality

The fruitful leader will testify to “stepping up into union with Christ.” This leader will pursue practices and rhythms that intentionally place the leader at the feet of, and face to face with, Jesus.²⁶⁷ Out of this abiding life will flow revelation and spiritual sustenance. It is anticipated that Scripture will nourish, sustain and speak to, guide and correct the leader. The renaissance leader ought to operate out of intentional strategies to keep spiritually and emotionally oxygenated.

Renewal and transformation

The leader who is called to lead a church on journey of renewal and change will experience personal renewal and transformation. This raises diagnostic questions around

²⁶³ John 15:16.

²⁶⁴ Acts 26:19.

²⁶⁵ Romans 8:14.

²⁶⁶ Revelation 2:11.

²⁶⁷ Note Mary’s posture and her attentiveness to Jesus in Luke 10:38-42.

the normative task: How did the leader experience the love and power of God afresh? How did the leader encounter the Holy Spirit? How was the leader drawn into deeper repentance and childlike trust? How did the leader respond to opposition and resistance? How did God use the scalpel of pain in the life of the leader? Did the leader step into a new level of brokenness?

The leader ought to lead the way not simply into a new organizational culture but into the heart of God in this journey of change. This means the research subjects will be able to clearly identify how they have personally experienced change as both a learner and a leader.

Missional leadership

A renaissance leader will lead the congregation under his oversight to live beyond itself, *with a redemptive intentionality*, to live for the sake of the world, calling the people of God to participate in the *missio Dei*. The renaissance leader will therefore steward their influence, including the pulpit, to help the people of God follow Jesus into the mission fields. The renaissance leader will discern God's vision and help facilitate the discovery or rediscovery of the congregation's collective vocation.

The generative gifts of apostle, prophet and evangelist are given to fuel missional impulse and apostolic gifting, in particular, is catalytic for moving the church on mission. Thus a renaissance leader has a unique charismatic empowerment to foster missional impulse if apostle is their foundational gift or if the leader displays apostolic bias with apostle as their secondary leadership gifting.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Research Project: Design & Delivery

Review

Chapter Two identified that a change journey is a daunting and perilous project, where the point leader must serve as *pacesetter*. Congregational turnaround is a “hard messy business”- not for the faint of heart. The leader must address the issues that have led to decline and slow death and anticipate resistance and opposition. Missional renewal will involve the leader experiencing personal spiritual renewal and leading the process through an intentional change pathway. Deep change is required for organizational renewal and this will involve the leader experiencing transformation to effect culture shift.¹

The Literature Review indicated that gifting and personality are significant factors in the leader’s capacity and ability to function effectively as a change agent. The leader with primary apostolic gifting or apostolic bias² is best equipped for the challenges of missional renewal. The leadership personalities best predisposed for the challenges of church transformation were identified as high D, high I or high D/I in the DISC profile.

The project was built on three foundational pillars: missiology, a theology of spiritual renewal, and an understanding of missional leadership. These foundations informed the framing of the research project with its diagnostics and structured interviews. The issue of missiology is critical because missiology and ecclesiology

¹ Reflecting these frameworks, the interview was structured around Kotter’s eight step change process and an understanding of Quinn’s Deep Change paradigm.

² Apostolic bias means that the leader has apostle as their secondary leadership gifting. For example, a leader with the gift of evangelist who has apostle as her secondary gift is an apostolic evangelist – who has apostolic bias. Similarly, a teacher who is a TA has apostolic bias.

interact with each other in dynamic tension.³ A church transformation journey is much more than an exercise in organizational restructuring or ministry recalibration. It involves deep spiritual renewal in the life of the leader and the congregation. Proverbs speaks to the defining nature of renewal: “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life .”⁴ With this in mind, interview questions probed into the sustaining spirituality and rhythms of the pastors.⁵ Missional engagement requires missional leadership and an exposition of the five gifts Jesus gave his church, APEST, led to the conclusion that the more generative or sodalic gifts of apostle, prophet and evangelist. were best suited to sparking missional renewal. The APEST diagnostic was conducted with particular interest in apostolic gifting as catalytic for fresh missional impulse.⁶

Introduction

The project focused on “renaissance leaders” –those who are agents for organizational change and congregational redirection into more intentional and evident external focus. This was assessed through determining how a congregation moved from “Private Club” simply caring for her own constituents and merely adopting an attractional posture – to embracing the centrifugal movement of incarnational ministry participating

³ In hindsight the research project would have been enriched by having the interviewees explicitly identify their respective missional operating systems, since this shaped the vision they were calling their congregations to. The missiological framework will determine the shape and scope of missional engagement.

⁴ Proverbs 4:23 NLT. This is a word to the heart of a leader and to the corporate life of a congregation.

⁵ As I have read, written, and reflected on this project long after the interviews have been recorded – I would – if I had a mulligan – press further into how the leaders appropriated and experienced the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in greater measure. Not simply gaining conceptual clarity on their respective understandings of pneumatology but their journeys in the life of the Spirit and how they encountered God’s empowering presence.

⁶ The prophet with his or her sensitivity to the heart and voice of God and the external impulse of evangelist can also spark fresh faithfulness, a new commitment to holiness and a fresh engagement with lostness. However, the biblical and theological review led to the measured conclusion that the leader with apostolic gifting has a unique anointing for calling for and fostering missional renewal.

with Jesus in his mission. This is of particular interest since,” the truly missional energy of the church flows outward as an incarnational impulse.”⁷ The “renaissance leader” is not simply a change agent who architects and presides over incremental change; the renaissance leader experiences and leads a congregation through “deep change” – effecting change that shapes the congregational culture.

The goal of this research project was to identify the leadership capacities, and approaches that proved effective for missional renewal in an established congregation. In view were 15 Canadian congregations that reportedly demonstrated greater engagement in the *missio Dei*, as a result of an intentional change journey brought about by the influences and activities of the point leader. Bosch asserted, “Mission is more and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is the alerting of people to the universal reign of God through Christ.”⁸ Of interest then was the impetus towards greater investment in and vigor in the declaration *and* the demonstration of good news in 15 Canadian congregations brought about by intentional activities sparked by the leadership of the senior pastor.

A further aim was, to identify the kind of leader best equipped – through personality and spiritual gifting- to bring about missional renaissance. An additional focus was identifying effective rhythms, practices, and behaviors that serve missional renewal in an established congregation.

In short, the research focused on two interrelated questions. What kind of *person* is best suited to initiate and oversee congregational missional renewal? And, secondly, what kind of practices cultivate and strengthen the process of missional renewal?

⁷ Michael Frost, *The Road to Missional* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books ,2012), 24.

⁸ David J. Bosch, *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1995), 33.

This project utilized rigorous qualitative research. This allows reflective practitioners to draw on the narrative power of the perspectives and experiences of renaissance leaders who have successfully navigated change. “The narrative base of qualitative research is crucial in terms of the significance of its contribution to human knowledge. Theology and religious experience are communicated primarily within stories.”⁹ In this project, “the researcher (was) involved with the research process, not as a distant observer, but as an active observer and co-creator of the interpretive experience.”¹⁰

Through intensive qualitative interviews, life history and participant observation the research project yielded “thick description” of the stories, qualities, and perspectives of leaders who have successfully exercised leadership resulting in congregational redirection into more avowedly externally focused faith communities.

The interviews were structured and “semi-standardized” and extrapolated leadership approaches to change, and identified congruence or dissonance with Kotter’s change pathway. In light of Quinn’s change paradigm, the interviews also ascertained where the leaders themselves were transformed in the journey. The interviews identified the qualities and perspectives of those leaders who successfully served their congregations as missional catalysts creating movement towards increased external focus. The interviews identified qualities, perspectives and approaches that are common to “renaissance leaders” – those leaders who successfully led their congregations through an intentional process that results in greater external focus. “A major advantage of the

⁹ John Swinton & Harriet Mowat, *Practical theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM ,2006), 31.

¹⁰ Ibid, 35.

interview is its adaptability. A skillful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings.”¹¹

A research diary was maintained. The journal entries, and a variety of documents gleaned from participant observer research in a congregational change project, also yielded thick descriptive material to inform the research project. Participant observer research in C2C Church Planting assessment centers also fueled the research process. Issues of leadership character, readiness, and capabilities for launching a church plant provoked reflection on concomitant qualities for rebooting an established congregation in a new missional trajectory.

Identifying candidates

This writer initially attempted to identify candidates through Natural Church Development (NCD) Canada. NCD assesses church health on the basis of eight quality characteristics: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship service, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships.¹² The NCD paradigm assumes church health precedes church growth and that all of the eight quality characteristics must be present for a healthy, growing church.

The need-oriented evangelism dimension was of particular interest in relation to this project’s focus. The NCD process involves identifying the congregational minimum factor – the lowest quality characteristic and then focusing energy and resources on the identified deficiency and establishing goals that address the minimum factor. A

¹¹ Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project* 2nd Ed. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), 91.

¹² Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development Handbook* (Moggerhanger, England: BCGA, 1996).

congregation with need oriented evangelism as its minimum factor is demonstrably in need of evangelistic revitalization. This writer assumed, that leaders who have used NCD in this way, demonstrate a concern for missional engagement. The researcher also assumed that these “NCD leaders” who proved successful in their endeavors would inform the analysis of leadership qualities and perspectives amongst agents for organizational redirection into externally focused congregations. This approach to candidate selection was discarded since interactions with NCD proved unfruitful¹³ and problematic.¹⁴

A Way Forward Through Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling was utilized and initially yielded 17 candidates. “Snowball or chain sampling involves asking others who would be a good choice to be involved in the sample...The purpose of this sampling procedure is to identify critical individuals to include in the sample.”¹⁵ One candidate who assumed the leadership of a church plant that had imploded and declined, and navigated missional change resulting in a reinvigorated congregation that has multiplied twice had to be eliminated. A second candidate was also eliminated.¹⁶

¹³ Communication with NCD proved protracted and cumbersome. Release of information required personal approval from the founder. NCD did not want this researcher to have direct access to the subjects and insisted on mediating all communication. Once this was attained, the convoluted process did not yield a significant number of candidates. Those who were identified only achieved incremental movement in the need oriented evangelism index. Clearly, incremental change meant congregational shift or deep change had not been attained.

¹⁴ On reflection, I have concluded that the NCD paradigm does not truly measure missional engagement and is skewed towards an attractional bias with its focus on congregational programming and design. It does not sufficiently attend to missional context or gauge community engagement.

¹⁵ Ronald C. Martella, Ronald Nelson, & Nancy E. Marchand-Martella, *Research Methods* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999), 269.

¹⁶ The second candidate was presented as a re-planting pastor. Investigation into his work proved ambiguous. It was unclear in meetings with the candidate, and in discussions with others, if the

The snowball sampling, attained through contacting church planting directors, denominational executives, and field workers yielded 15 candidates spread across Mennonite Brethren (MB), Church of the Nazarene, Associated Gospel Church, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Fellowship Baptist, an independent nondenominational work, and a chapel with roots in the Plymouth Brethren. There were 7 MB pastors surveyed, 2 Fellowship Baptist leaders, 2 CMA, 1 Nazarene, 1 AGC, 1 Chapel (ex-PB) and a nondenominational congregation.¹⁷ The leaders exercised congregational ministry in British Columbia (10), Alberta (1), Manitoba (2) and Ontario (2). Eleven respondents were skewed towards densely populated urban centers or suburban communities with only 2 out of the 15 serving rural communities. This urban/rural spread closely reflects Canada's actual demographic spread with 81% of Canadians living in towns and cities and 19% living in rural communities.¹⁸

Leadership Diagnostics

This research adopted three leadership evaluation tools: DISC, APEST and Learning Agility.¹⁹ The goal of this was to create a research triangulation, which is the

congregation was a church plant or a revitalization project. In light of this, he was eliminated from the research.

¹⁷ This congregation was part of a Reformed-Charismatic network that imploded and became a C2C Network church. A courtship with the British Columbia Conference of Mennonite Churches was entered into, however, this local church as yet to affiliate with a denomination.

¹⁸ All of the research subjects are Caucasian. While the majority of established church leaders may be white Anglo Saxon pastors this does not reflect Canada's rich and growing ethnic diversity.

¹⁹ Each research subject was asked to complete a learning agility self-evaluation, designed by John Thomas of Redeemer City-to-City. While there is little doubt that this diagnostic would have yielded rich qualitative data. Mark Reynolds claimed, at a C2C training event in June 2013, that next to godly character, learning agility is the most important dimension for a church planter. In personal email correspondence (Feb. 26, 2016) he described the facets of learning agility as "getting results in a changing situation, change management, people resourcefulness, self-awareness, and mental agility." The relevance to this project is obvious. However, it had to be discarded from the project. Despite several requests, only four candidates completed the survey.

use of “several kinds of methods or data, including both the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches.”²⁰

The Evangelical Free Church in the USA asserts that the optimal personality profile for a church planter is “The Inventor”; the ENFP personality in the Myers-Briggs Test.²¹ Youth for Christ USA has long used their in-house Predictive Index as part of staff discernment and placement, with particular interest in the suitability of Executive Directors to oversee the various local chapters across the land.²² It follows that personality profile or leadership style can be more than informative. It can indicate the suitability of a leader for a specific role and set of responsibilities. More than that, as is the focus of this study, personality can be a predictor of the ability of a leader to effect missional renewal.

“In their most basic form, the way we *think* and the way we *act* define our personality. Emotions are the reaction to our attitude and behavior. Dr. John Geier, pioneer in the creation of self-administered, self-scored personality tests, defines personality as: “*How we view and respond to life’s situations.*” DISC is a descriptive framework to identify and describe our personality through the lenses of thoughts and actions.”²³

²⁰ M.Q. Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation & Research Methods* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishing, 1990), 187.

²¹ See http://mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/church_planting_self_assessment.pdf.

²² This was the practice when I was hired as an Evangelist-At-Large for Seattle Area YFC. YFC had four ED profiles; two of which were preferred for the ED who is the point leader in a Youth for Christ expression.

²³ *Portrait Predictor DISC Manual* (Minneapolis: Strategic Team Makers Inc., 2008), 2.

DISC Profile

The DISC profile was administered to identify the personality of the research subjects. The DISC Profile identifies four types: D –dominant /directive; I- influencing /interactive; S –steady/supportive and C – cautious /corrective. The DISC profile has been utilized as part of church planter assessment where high D and high I leaders and D/I leaders have historically been deemed as the preferred church planter profiles.²⁴ This is because leaders with these profiles tend to be the most successful in launching a new church and developing a sustainable congregation.

The D leader is direct, independent, dominant, assertive, results focused, and competitive.” The profile suggests that one with this temperament may be somewhat strong and controlling.”²⁵ The D is often perceived as a take-charge person who gives orders. He or she moves quickly and focuses on the task at hand.

The "I" leader is inspiring, persuasive, motivating, enthusiastic, optimistic, and collaborative. They have a natural in-built ability to influence or lead others. The "I" leader moves quickly and focuses on the process to be done. They value motivation and inspiration and can deliver a convincing message. The D and I thrive on challenge and opportunity respectively.²⁶ This suggests a predisposition to the ministry context of a church turnaround and that the church renewal project may prove appealing rather than daunting or overwhelming to these personalities.

The Steadiness and Conscientious temperaments appear ill suited to the white water rafting expedition of congregational renewal and organizational change. The

²⁴ Conversation with Scott Thomas at C2C Calgary Church Planting Assessment Centre, Sept 2014. Thomas shared this information gleaned from his former role as Acts 29 Network Director.

²⁵ Aubrey Malphurs & Gordon E. Penfold, *Re-VISION – The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 133.

²⁶ Ibid, 16.

“Steady Eddie” functions best in a consistent and stable environment and working with people where there is little or no conflict.²⁷ The Conscientious Leader disengages under pressure and this may entail not only physical but also emotional withdrawal. Cs are also slow to change.²⁸ This of course, will prove problematic in exercising the role of a change pacesetter and embodying the values of the emerging organizational culture. Furthermore, Kotter writes that change journeys are frequently derailed by “Under communicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000).”²⁹ The Conscientious temperament is ill-equipped to communicate, communicate, and then communicate some more with the necessary redundancy for a transformation vision to stick, or to invest the emotional capital in getting key stakeholders on board and investing in the conversations and correspondence necessary for buy-in. Malphurs notes: “They would benefit from communicating more. It’s not so much that they don’t communicate well as they don’t communicate at all.”³⁰

The Steadiness and Conscientious temperaments are not well suited to face the unsettling dynamics of a congregational reboot. These profiles do not possess the catalytic capacities necessary to call forth and foster a climate of congregational change.

In contrast, leaders who have a combination of D and I or are a lone D or I “to an overwhelming degree”³¹ are suited for the demands and dynamics of being a “re-envisioning pastor.” Malphurs and Penfold intentionally use the label “re-envisioning pastor” because of their conviction about the significance and weight of fresh God honoring vision in a church transformation. They conducted research on REPs and

²⁷ Malphurs & Penfold, 134.

²⁸ Ibid, p.135

²⁹ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 9.

³⁰ Malphurs & Penfold, *Re-VISION – The Key to Transforming Your Church*, 135.

³¹ Ibid, 135.

NREPS.³² They examined the DISC profiles of REPs. REPs were classified as being able to lead a plateaued or declined congregation and preside over numerical growth. They discovered almost three out of four (73%) of the leaders surveyed “patterned as some combination of the D or I temperament on the Personal Profile.”³³

In reflecting on the significance of their findings Malphurs and Penfold comment, “Pastors must understand their divine design in order to improve their ability to serve the body of Christ.”³⁴ This comment speaks to the issue of fit. What kind of leader is the best fit for this ministry? The DISC profile helps identify the leadership styles that thrive, flourish and bear fruit in a missional renaissance.³⁵

APEST

The APEST diagnostic was administered to identify the spiritual gifting or anointing for leadership in the pastors surveyed. Jesus has given five leadership gifts to His Church – apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher.³⁶

The APEST assessment is a profiling instrument designed to assist leaders in identifying their ministry style in relation to fivefold ministry. This diagnostic is offered in both solo and 360 formats. The 360 format accommodates an evaluation of the candidate by between 5 and 10 colleagues – this enables a comparison between a leader’s self-perception and how those they serve with assess the leader’s ministry style. This project was designed around the use of the individual APEST diagnostic. There is

³² Re-envisioning Pastors and Non-Re-Envisioning Pastor.

³³ Malphurs & Penfold, *Re-VISION – The Key to Transforming Your Church*, 111. The authors sampled 103 leaders who met their REP criteria and identified 75 as D, I or a DI combination.

³⁴ Ibid., 112-113.

³⁵ Only eleven of the subjects returned their DISC profiles. As a result, the research focus narrowed in on the interviews as the primary source of qualitative data. APEST emerged as the of focus of leadership style. A brief commentary on the DISC findings is offered in Appendix Three.

³⁶ Ephesians 4:11-13.

obviously great benefit in accessing a 360 and not only having the point leader's self-evaluation but the added benefit of team members who see the subject up close and personal in ministry settings.

The 360 would doubtless have research value but could prove both pricy³⁷ and administratively cumbersome. While even a seasoned leader would benefit from the evaluations of teammates, friends, and family, it was assumed that these leaders possessed sufficient self-awareness to adequately give helpful responses regarding their own actions and motivations.

The designer of APEST, Australian missiologist, Alan Hirsch, gave free access to the individual diagnostic which was gratefully received!

The issue of leadership blind spots notwithstanding,³⁸ the individual APEST yielded rich insights into the leadership biases, passions, expressions, and capacities of the leaders, particularly in how the leaders are endued by God to participate in mission and equip others for service. The APEST diagnostic addresses the defining question: *how has Jesus by His Spirit made this leader for ministry and mission?*

The APEST is an online self-assessment tool that asks a sequence of questions that may solicit more than one appropriate answer. The primary vocation or base gifting of the leader is identified with a numerical score, as is the secondary gifting, which Hirsch claims is important too.³⁹ As he remarks, "human being are never one-

³⁷ With initially 17 leaders targeted in this project and with 15 respondents, the 360 at \$35 per test was discarded because of its cost.

³⁸ Everyone has blind spots as illustrated by the quadrants in the Johari window: the known self that is known to self, and known to others. The hidden self that is hidden to the self but known to others; the hidden self that is known to self and hidden to others. A 360 offers the powerful opportunity of bringing awareness of quadrant three and creating an opportunity for learning and growth. However, as noted above this project utilized the individual assessment.

³⁹ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 82.

dimensional.”⁴⁰”In psychographics theory the primary aptitude or gift appropriates the secondary one and expresses itself through it. So people receiving (Hirsch’s) ministry (which has Apostle as primary) get apostolic thinking expressed through teaching (his secondary gifting).”⁴¹

The APEST profile ranks all five gifts present in a leader, offering 120 possible permutations. Of particular significance is the primary or base gifting and the secondary gifting. Therefore, this was the focus of evaluative scrutiny.

The research subjects were invited via email to go online and do the DISC and APEST self-evaluations. Links were provided that enabled them to do this. The respondents emailed a pdf of their DISC report. The Forgotten Ways, Hirsch’s organization provided the individual APEST tests and a comparative grid showing all the tests in a unified table.

Qualitative Interviews

Interviews were either conducted face to face and recorded with the candidate’s permission on a handheld MP4 player or conducted via video conferencing. The video interviews were conducted via Citrix GoToMeeting which enabled an audio recording of each video meeting. The face to face, and video interviews enabled an assessment of not only what was being said but also an interpretation of nonverbal communication and cues. The face to face interviews were conducted in quiet and controlled environments – with the exception of two which were conducted in an Irish Pub. While this created an inviting setting – both interviews had to contend with ambient noise which presented the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 82.

⁴¹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 81.

transcriber an auditory challenge. Extensive notes were also taken during each interview, to serve as a backup, in the event of any challenges with technology or subsequent problems with recording.⁴²

The interviews were subsequently transcribed for analysis and interpretation. The use of transcripts was deemed vital in order to have a written text to reflect on and exegete. The transcripts created the opportunity to compare interview responses and identify common narrative threads in the leader's story and comparing leadership approaches in tackling the change project. Securing verbatim transcripts avoided the hazard of inaccuracy or incompleteness of the data. The researcher engaged in thematic analysis of the transcripts.

The "structured interview"⁴³ questions were not given in advance to the candidates. Permission to record and transcribe each interview was sought from and granted by each subject. Transcripts and results of the leadership diagnostics were offered to each subject.⁴⁴

Further insights into the leaders' stories, vision, values, and contexts were provided through "document analysis."⁴⁵ Church websites, official correspondence, and personal and congregational publications all contributed to a comprehensive yield of qualitative data.

⁴² The backup strategy proved vital when only 15 minutes of one candidate's interview was converted from video interview to audio file because of issues with internet connectivity.

⁴³ Paul D. Leedy, *Practical Research Planning & Design*, 5th ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1993), 192.

⁴⁴ Only one interviewee requested his transcript – all the candidates had access to their own DISC profile and their own APEST diagnostic.

⁴⁵ Ronald C. Martella, Ronald Nelson & Nancy E. Marchand-Martella, *Research Methods*, 276.

The Interview Content

The interview offered a sequence of open ended questions, and the same questions were asked of each candidate in the same order.⁴⁶ In order to facilitate a “naturalness” in interviewee responses, the questions were not given beforehand.⁴⁷ Spontaneity in response was preferred to having the interviewee prepare beforehand. Each interview started with an attempt to identify the circumstances and motives of the pastor assuming leadership of their current congregation. Of particular interest was whether or not a strong sense of call was articulated. Questions that addressed the state of the church when the subject assumed point leadership were explored. These were followed by questions that mirrored Kotter’s eight step change pathway. Inserted into the Kotter pathway was a question that helped identify the role of the preaching and teaching ministry in calling for congregational change and missional renewal. The leader was invited to disclose pain and brokenness in their story and in the change journey since it was assumed that there would be a personal cost in pursuing change; that God uses broken vessels and that the Lord has a developmental agenda in the heart and life of the leader that may be implemented in times of stress, conflict and difficulty.

Joseph was mistreated, wrongfully accused and imprisoned. “God meant it for good.”⁴⁸ Imprisonment humbled the arrogant dreamer⁴⁹ and prepared him for leadership. Moses, self-appointed hero,⁵⁰ spent 40 years in desert preparation for leadership. A

⁴⁶ I have labelled this approach a “semi-standardized” interview but since the questions were pre-developed and “each participant (was) exposed to the same questions and topics in the same order” (Martella et al, *Research Methods*, 289)- it could be asserted that *standardized interviews* were conducted.

⁴⁷ Two subjects specifically requested reviewing the interview questions prior to our appointment. I explained that I wanted them to respond freely and spontaneously. I also concluded that this would avoided skewing the interview by the delivery of rehearsed or canned answers.

⁴⁸ Genesis 50:20.

⁴⁹ Genesis 37:2-11.

⁵⁰ Acts 7:23-32 note 7:25.

leader's challenging and painful experiences can be part of God's crushing.⁵¹ In pain and brokenness, and the pressure associated with church transitioning, a pastor may come into a new place of childlike dependence and into a fresh awareness of God's unconditional love and acceptance.

Questions were also framed around the sustaining spirituality of the leader through the change process. The interview also probed for the leader's biggest challenges and learnings during the journey towards greater missional engagement. The spiritual vitality of the leader, their appropriation of revelation and direction from God in His Word and strategies for physical, emotional, and spiritual sustenance were all of significant interest. Here, Quinn's wisdom that the agent of transformation will experience change was put to the test. The final section of the interview focused on what changed – the missional outcomes resulting from the change journey. This portion of the interview focused on the congregational fruit and specific concrete changes brought about by a more avowed external focus and commitment to missional engagement.

Participant Observer Research

The researcher had regular interaction with two of the subjects in an ongoing coaching relationship. In these relationships, he was a mentor and sounding board who prayed with and supported a leader attempting a re-plant and another leader who had oversight of a broken congregation that had experienced a deep leadership betrayal. The researcher also had adjunct supervision of one of the subjects in their part-time role with

⁵¹ Clinton asserts that ministry flows out of being. God uses difficulties such as isolation, relocation, intense pressure and conflict to develop character as part of a divine leadership development strategy. See: Robert J. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 1988), 153-174.

C2C Network. Critical incident and reflective research journals were maintained during this process.

Action Research

The ongoing research affected ministry praxis, and thus part of the journey involved action research since reflection on investigative work modified and informed the ongoing ministry.⁵² This has proven highly beneficial. This was particularly the case in the researcher's interaction with and contributions to preaching, teaching, and training in established church settings. The research conducted here fueled strategic deliberations around supporting established churches on mission and multiplication. This informed the planning for C2C's Multiply Conference in Vancouver in 2017 where a dedicated track on church renewal and revitalization will be offered. In addition, the data gleaned from this research church has been used in developing a Missional Capacity Assessment and a Missional Leadership Assessment for the Manitoba Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. These diagnoses will identify missional potency and help formulate supporting and equipping strategies for MB Congregations in Manitoba. It is anticipated that this will become a resource offered across Canada.

There are drawbacks to active participant observation⁵³, however, the interplay of reflection with the researcher's ongoing ministry praxis proved stimulating and has enhanced this researcher's ability to serve and support churches on mission.

⁵² Anne Edwards and Robin Talbot, *The Hard Pressed Researcher* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd, 1994), 53.

⁵³ George Lovell, *An Action Research Project to Test the Applicability of the Non-Directive Concept in a Church, Youth and Community Setting* (London: University of London, 1973), 55 ff.

In Chapter 5 the DISC and APEST discoveries are outlined, demonstrating that the project's hypothesis that apostolic leaders and highly dominant and high influencing leaders are the leaders best suited for the rigors and rhythms of church transformation. Chapter 5 also outlines the discoveries from the interviews conducted. These categories are call to ministry, the change process, the power of the Word of God, spiritual renewal, personal transformation, and markers of missional engagement.

Firstly, the question of calling is addressed. To what extent did the leader step into the congregational role and the change journey with a sense that this was an assignment from the Lord? How did this sense of call sustain the leader? Working on the assumption that Kotter's eight step change journey is a normative framework for a congregational change journey – the leader's adherence to this pathway is identified and how this fueled culture shift. Conversely, if the leader strayed from the Kotter change pathway how did this affect culture shift? The power of the pulpit as a vehicle for the Word of the Lord is examined in casting vision for and sustaining change and missional engagement. The extent to which the pastors strategically used their preaching to fuel and undergird change is evaluated. The leaders' spiritual vitality, spiritual practices and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit is presented. The leader's understanding and articulation of how they encountered God and how they experienced transformation in the process is identified and discussed. The results of the various congregational change projects are explored, specifically examining the outcomes accomplished.

The significance of these learnings are commented on and expounded in Chapter 6 with recommendations for congregations and leaders desiring to pursue missional renewal.

CHAPTER FIVE RESEARCH PROJECT RESULTS

Introduction

The goal of this research project was to identify the dimensions and disciplines of a renaissance leader. This involved addressing two questions which shaped the research process: *what kind of leader proves catalytic for the missional renewal of an established church* and *what leadership practices and approaches are essential in faithfully and fruitfully leading a congregation into greater missional engagement?*

Through snow ball sampling 17 leaders were approached which resulted in the evaluation of 15 Canadian pastors who led their congregations on an intentional change journey resulting in greater missional intentionality and outward focus. Eleven of these leaders continue to pastor the congregations which were the focus of this research.¹

The leaders were assessed through the use of standardized structured interviews, which form the main entrée of qualitative data. The interviews were framed to investigate several dimensions as summarized below.

The interviews² explored the circumstances and motives of the pastor assuming leadership of their current congregation. Of particular interest was whether or not a strong sense of call was articulated. Questions that addressed the state of the church when the subject assumed point leadership were explored. These were followed by questions that mirrored Kotter's eight step change pathway. A question was raised to identify the role of the preaching and teaching ministry in calling for congregational change and missional

¹ As of June 2016 – Phillip Valletly transitioned into a market place role in October 2015. David Smith and Crossway had a parting of the ways in April 2016. Robert Gray is on a six-month medical leave which will extend through year-end 2016. Paul Johnson accepted a position as lead pastor of a Minneapolis congregation in spring 2016.

² Appendix 1 lists the interview questions.

renewal. Of particular interest was how each pastor used the pulpit to cast vision, call for renewal and repentance and invite their flock to follow Jesus on mission. The leader was invited to disclose pain and brokenness in their story and in the change journey. It was assumed that there would be a measure of personal cost in pursuing change; that God uses broken vessels and that the Lord has a developmental agenda in the heart and life of the leader that may be implemented in times of stress, conflict and difficulty. The issues of leadership learnings were probed to further identify where these leaders encountered God in the process and what their personal discoveries and learnings were.

In addition, DISC personality tests were administered, and the APEST leadership gifting diagnostic was used and a Learning Agility self-evaluation was sent to the subjects. The Learning Agility self-evaluation had to be discarded, as indicated in Chapter Four due to insufficient responses. The main focus of the research is the qualitative data gleaned from the interviews. This will form the substance of reporting here and the backbone of interpretation and application in Chapter Six.³

However, of greater interest is the leadership approaches of a faithful and fruitful renaissance leader. The actual effective practices, priorities and disciplines of a renaissance leader are the focus of this investigation. This emphasis is underscored by the fact that the identified optimal capacities of the leader embarking on the change pathway can be undermined or thwarted by factors such as spiritual neglect, lack of self-care and relational or organizational incompetence. Stated another way, the change journey must

³ Chapter Six also offers a section on Personality, Gifting and Renaissance Leaders. This is of interest in exploring the issue of *capacity* and reflecting on the issue already raised of apostolic leadership as the normative foundational gifting for a renaissance leader, and the assumption that if apostle is not the primary gift the fruitful renaissance leaders will display apostolic bias. (Apostolic bias being defined as apostle as secondary leadership gift.) This section will reflect on leadership capacity through personality and explore the idea of a preferred DISC leader profile.

not only have the right people on the right seats on the bus⁴ but the right priorities, practices and disciplines to fuel the change journey.

In this chapter research findings are reported. In the next and final chapter, the practical implications for ministry are explored. What follows below are discoveries gleaned from the qualitative interviews. These are explored in six categories: call to ministry, the change process, the power of the Word of God, spiritual renewal, personal transformation, and markers of missional engagement.

Interview Findings

The Call to Ministry: *Why did the pastor assume congregational leadership?*

Ken Shigematsu described a time of personal transition. He was trying to discern what God had for him next. During day three of a week of prayer and fasting the words, “Tenth Avenue Alliance”, came to him. On day five, the words, “Senior Pastor”, came to mind. He decided to visit the church. He concluded, initially, that as a young Asian leader he was a misfit in a greying Caucasian congregation. Despite his misgivings, he met with the incumbent senior pastor two weeks later who then informed Ken that he was transitioning out of his role.

Ken put his name forward as a candidate for the newly vacant lead role without revealing the sense of divine leading he had as a result of seeking God through prayer and fasting. In self-deprecating humility Ken Shigematsu claims, “the church was pretty desperate, so there wasn’t much of an applicant pool.” Ken does testify to a clear sense that God called him back in 1996 to the role he continues to serve in.

⁴ Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001), 41-62.

Pastor Phil Collins describes taking his post as, “obedience to the Holy Spirit.” He initially took the role of campus pastor at the main campus of a multisite congregation in the interior of BC. The elders had decided to split the Senior Leader-CEO role from pastoral oversight of the main campus. However, six months into Phil’s new role, the CEO position was still vacant. The elders had unsuccessfully interviewed several candidates and therefore had not found the senior leader. At the invitation of the elders, Phil submitted himself to a sequence of interviews and a congregational vote, and then assumed role of overall senior leader and primary communicator at the main campus.⁵

Jon Thomson gave the most expansive response of all interviewees recounting formative episodes in his adolescence where God spoke to him almost with the force of an audible voice to move to the church that he now serves as senior pastor. In his interview, Jon recounted significant “God moments” when God spoke with great clarity and direction.

In the third year of his undergrad degree he became the youth pastor, a role in which he served for 7 ½ years, despite his resistance to stepping into youth ministry. As a then 29-year-old he had presided over a growing youth ministry. Unexpectedly in the middle of his devotions, as he read the story of Joseph, God spoke, and Jon had what he labelled “an encounter with Christ.”

“By the time you are 30 years old you will be the senior leader of this church. There will be no other leader beyond you other than me. I’m giving you my signet ring.”

⁵ Phil’s language is significant here. He firstly identifies a sense of call and that he was led by the Holy Spirit into his current role (cf. Romans 8:14).

Then He said, “In seven years you will have three children”⁶, and in 7 years you will prepare and then you will touch the world.”⁷

This was further confirmed when Jon reluctantly⁸ attended Missions Fest. The keynote speaker challenged him and reinforced the revelation he had. Family members who were clueless about what Jon had received and his internal struggle piped up with, “Whatever the LORD just said to you better listen and obey.”

The senior leader, who in 22 years took the church from 50 to 1000 people, turned to Jon in a staff meeting and said, “I think the Lord is asking me to leave.” Then he turned to 29-year-old Jon and said, “You’re supposed to lead this.” During a sermon the incumbent senior leader commented, “You know, I always thought that Jonathan (i.e. Jon Thomson) would be my armor bearer but I’m going to be his.”. The final stage in the process was a unanimous vote from the elders for Jon Thomson to become the senior leader.

Pastor Chris Stevens recounted a matrix for discerning God’s will⁹, or hearing from God that he and his wife use when navigating “big life” decisions.¹⁰ Stevens claimed assuming senior leadership of Waterloo MB Church “was through a variety of promptings of the Lord. “

Chris initially rejected an invitation to consider his current position. There were several steps in the journey from Ottawa to Waterloo. During a devotional talk from a

⁶ Jon and his wife were unable to have children at the time. They now have three children.

⁷ This disruptive word from the Lord came in a conservative evangelical non-charismatic context.

⁸ He was a foreign missions fatigued missionaries’ kid who was offside with Mission Fest’s big push for global mission.

⁹ He recounted this using the hand – a thumb and four fingers –with the thumb being the Bible, and the fifth element being the little finger. Firstly, how does God’s Word speak to you? Secondly, the Holy Spirit, thirdly confirming circumstances, fourthly godly advisors and lastly God’s silence.

¹⁰ Stevens expressed a clear expectation that God speaks and directs and that His children need to be attentive to him.

pastoral colleague Chris was convicted by the Spirit that his biological family, some of whom he had led to Christ and his church family¹¹, were idols. He had hoped that God was simply correcting him and that he need to confess his idolatry and submit to the empowering Lordship of Jesus. However, a bigger story was emerging.

He subsequently agreed to meet with the Waterloo MB search committee¹². Despite his declared lack of interest, after a further approach he agreed to send his information to the Search Team. He did so because he was *feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit that he wasn't open*. During this time, one of his daughters was invited to participate in the national gymnastics program in Waterloo. Chris began to see a few *confirming circumstances* surfacing.

After he had met with the Board and said “no”, he began to feel that he was walking in disobedience. Chris and his wife Adrienne, attended the C2C Church Planters Retreat in November 2013 in Ottawa, where they were living at the time. Alan Hirsch, who was teaching at the retreat, walked over to Chris and Adrienne and gave a prophetic word, “God’s called you to leave where you are and go somewhere new.” Hirsch then gave a series of promises that God would fulfill if they did leave and said, “You need to be obedient.”

Chris recounts that the next day after they had returned from the retreat one of their intercessors dropped in on them. She had a dream through which God spoke to her and she said, “Adrienne, whatever it is that God’s doing right now, it’s not just for Chris, but it’s for you as well.” Then the intercessor woke up in the middle of the night the

¹¹ Stevens had planted the church.

¹² He did so really out of respect for the leader who invited him, Karen West. Karen now serves alongside Chris as his Executive Pastor. He responded to her that although he did not get an obvious “no”, he still was not interested in the open position.

following night, came back and said, “This is not just for Chris and for you, this is for Sparrow.” The next night she woke up and she came back again and said, “This is not just for you and for Adrienne and for Sparrow but this is for Eden.”¹³

After the third visit the Stevens filled her in on what was going on and wept with her, as they recounted their call journey. Chris then talked with his church board about what was happening.

Adrienne¹⁴ then went to her boss to discuss the move. Chris recounts, “Adrienne met with her boss, fully expecting him to be closed to this, but he said, “We’ll open a new center of Ottawa Hospital in Waterloo. I have a staff member who asked me yesterday to move to Waterloo and continue to work, I said ‘No’ to her. We will rehire her and she will work for you.” Chris then comments on the call journey, “Everywhere we thought we were going to get a “No”, God just kicked the door open. “

Pastor Rob Dyck stated, “I assumed leadership largely based on a call that my wife and I felt that the Lord had for us here in rural Abbotsford.”¹⁵ Dyck described stepping into a spiritually toxic congregation and pointed to God’s call as an anchor. “Short of the personal call I believed God had on my life to serve this church family, I would have bailed.”¹⁶ This sense of call sustained him during the turbulent early months of his pastorate.

As a Scottish university student, Robert Gray spent a summer as a ministry intern in Ontario. While leading a youth camp, he recounts, “I sensed God saying to me one night that one day I would be back in Canada. “He was unclear about what that would

¹³ Sparrow and Eden are Chris and Adrienne’s daughters.

¹⁴ Adrienne works for the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute as a Clinical Research Manager.

¹⁵ Dyck did not offer an extended call narrative or a guidance matrix but was clear that God had led him to the church he has pastored for the past 13 years.

¹⁶ Dyck shared this in correspondence with me May 15, 2013.

like. He finished his internship and returned to Scotland. He finished his education, got married and had a couple of sons. One evening as he and his wife were chatting she remarked, “this could be us for the next 35 years.” Robert remarked that it seemed at that point, God said, “Now’s the time to move.”

He emailed his denominational leaders across Canada and put a fleece¹⁷ out and said to the Lord, “God, the one that comes back, the one that I have the right sense about, that’s the one that I’m going to pursue.” He then talked with a regional leader from his denomination¹⁸ who shared the church’s story and this resonated with Robert. The church had gone through a very difficult season¹⁹. Reflecting on this, Robert stated, “I sensed God was calling me to initially bring healing and then redirection for the church.”

Delbert Enns had returned home to Canada from the mission field to revitalize a failing parachurch organization. He was part a congregation that found itself in turmoil. Delbert Enns sought God after he was approached to take the helm of his troubled home church.

The church faced both a leadership breakdown and a discipleship and assimilation challenge. It was a seeker driven, large attractional church which was proving unable to disciple and retain the people pulled into its electromagnetic field. The senior pastor resigned and then the board fired the executive pastor. The two senior staff transitions created a pastoral leadership vacuum.

¹⁷ Judges 6:36- 40. Gideon lays down a fleece to gain guidance confirmation from God. Robert Gray ‘s fleece was to receive confirmation through an open pastoral position, and expresses a desire to be led by God through confirming circumstance or an “open door” (Revelation 3:8; Colossians 4:3).

¹⁸ The District Superintendent of the Canada Pacific District of the Church of the Nazarene.

¹⁹ A significant if not singular factor in the church’s downturn was the criminal prosecution of a former pastor. A great deal of pain and fallout was created by the former staff person being imprisoned for possessing child pornography. Robert recounted that this troubled season extended for 5 or 6 years. He has in coaching conversations, talked about the broken trust and turmoil he entered into as senior pastor.

Delbert watched from the sidelines, lamenting the church's plight. He commented, "We were bleeding as a church. People were leaving by the hundreds."

A former elder, who knew Delbert and knew his track record in reengineering ailing and failing organizations approached him. He invited Delbert to consider taking the lead role at Eastview and reengineering the church just as he done in previous ministries.

He initially laughed the idea off, claiming he was not pastoral material. However, he was told, "We've been praying about it and there is a group of men and women praying for this. Would you consider praying about it?" After praying about it and talking to his family, he considered accepting the invitation to become the senior pastor of Eastview Church.

Delbert's initial reluctance to jump on the opportunity came from a dissatisfaction with the institutional church. This sense of ecclesial disenfranchisement led him to pour his leadership energies into non-profit and media enterprises. As he processed the opportunity he wrestled with God back in 2008. In response to the invitation to lead the church he prayed, "Lord... You need to change my heart first." He also explained his story, his posture regarding the institutional church and his wrestling with God to the congregation he has pastored now for 8 years, explaining "I need to be converted."²⁰

In the case studies above, God language, call language and seeking God and hearing God is explicit. However, this use of call language and hearing from God and seeking God was not uniform amongst the interviewees.

²⁰ In the interview Delbert related that slowly God is changing his heart and confessed, "I'm starting to love the local church."

Pastor Colin Van der Kuur emerged bruised from a church revitalization project. His denominational leaders affirmed him for his church revitalization work and when he sought their counsel, they recommended a couple of churches for him to consider.

An interim pastor played matchmaker between Colin and the Calvary Baptist church board. Based on the glowing recommendation and the affirmation of Colin's prior revitalization work the church pursued Van der Kuur. In their enthusiasm they claimed, "We'll do whatever it takes to change." Colin remarked, "They didn't really mean it, but they at least said the right things." Colin was the first pastor in the congregation's history to receive a 100% vote.

Pastor Scott Weatherford communicated that he threw his hat in the ring without any God reference in his succinct response²¹. "I responded to a search engine, sent them an email, which started a process of exploration between myself and their pastoral search team, which led to my selection."

Pastor Paul Johnson responded in a similar vein. He was the teaching pastor at a large church in Tucson and wanted to leave. "The vision of the church at that time was stagnant. *I did what everybody does, I hopped on churchstaffing.com*²² and this church up here in BC was there. It looked like a great opportunity and so one thing led to another and here I am."

Pastor Phillip Vallelly describes his assumption of the lead role as a result of firstly, a transition where the board terminated the incumbent senior pastor and secondly,

²¹ Pastor Scott has recounted to me in personal interactions that "Jesus has our YES before He asks" – is the posture of him and his wife and that his mantra is "All for Jesus". However, these axioms did not surface in his short answer.

²² www.churchstaffing.com is one of several websites where churches post openings and pastoral "job hunters" can see what is on offer. The italicised remarks normalize the business of surfing the web as standard pastoral practise. This is a decidedly different approach than, for example, Ken Shigematsu's week of prayer and fasting.

his own assertiveness, and a subsequent congregational affirmation of him taking the lead role.²³ Pastor Phillip was hired as a combo Worship and Children's Pastor. When his supervisor was fired Vallesly resisted the Church board's desire to hire an interim pastor. He felt that this would lead to maintaining the status quo. The board responded positively to Vallesly's push back regarding an interim pastor. This resulted in Phillip running the ship.

"We basically hustled through the next year to nine months with myself and a full-time secretary. At the end of that year they approached me and asked me to apply for the lead pastor position. I said, "I'm not going to apply. You can offer me the position because I already have a job." So they did and I accepted. The congregation thought it was a good idea."

Dave Smith stepped into the lead role²⁴ of a church in turmoil out of a "compulsion."²⁵ He was on staff as a church planting apprentice before landing in the hot seat of a congregation where a two year running conflict came to a head in an acrimonious split. He began to realize that he would not be planting out of the broken congregation. He began to look for other opportunities in vocational ministry. He was approached by the church staff to take on the lead role and embark on what he labelled a "replant." When asked why he assumed leadership at his congregation he said, "The

²³ This church is congregationally governed so his understated response that "the congregation thought it was a good idea" points to the board approach needing to go to the church body for a vote.

²⁴ His title was pastor of preaching and team strategy.

²⁵ This word, "compulsion", was spoken with real depth of feeling during the interview. However, God and Christ were initially conspicuous by their absence in this "compulsion." Paul uses this word to express a motivation for ministry; "Christ's love compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). The absence of explicit God language raises questions regarding what actually fuelled this younger leader's desire to jump into the hot seat of a church experiencing the heat of a fire storm. He later refers to the church being "broken" and "in turmoil from the conflict". This opens the possibility that a sense of obligation was the impetus for stepping into the role since the church had experienced a split and the remaining congregants were in grief and turmoil. The sense of obligation being put upon the church planting intern is expressed above in the comment, "if you don't do this we're in real trouble." Without explicit God language, and call language it also can be construed that youthful ambition and driven-ness were part of the fuel mix.

‘why’ was a sense of compulsion. There really never was, at any point, a question or a choice, or anything remotely like that. It was just, ‘if you don’t do this, we’re in real trouble.’”

Smith’s response to the first question did not elicit any God talk. The language here may be suggestive of external pressure creating a sense of obligation. However, when later asked in the interview regarding how he went about getting buy-in from major stakeholders and how he assembled major change leaders ²⁶, the language was God explicit. “There was a compulsion to lead and the compulsion I was coming under was first from the LORD.”

Matthew Price was the youth pastor at the church he now serves as lead pastor. He was an unsettled youth minister. Five years into his youth pastorate, he wondered if he could continue in his role for a further five years. He was tapped on the shoulder by the long-serving senior pastor.²⁷ Matthew was invited to pray about stepping into the shoes of his senior pastor. After prayer, Price embarked on an intentional succession plan which became in effect, a year -long audition for the lead role.

Andy Perrett recounted dissonance and conflict with a ministry he was working in. “I had pretty well fallen out with the leadership over some strategic decisions that were being made.” In addition to this he and his family were experiencing some tensions in the Anglican Church they were part of. That led to a period of personal confusion, frustration, anger, and Andy meeting with a counselor. As Andy worked through his issues and feelings with his counsellor, he saw that his “days were numbered in that organization.”

²⁶ This relates to Kotter’s necessary step of building a guiding coalition.

²⁷ Price’s predecessor served in the lead role for 17 years.

He then began to wonder what was next for him, and having had an extended period in a parachurch organization, what he might be able to do next. During this period of ministry transition they had joined Granville Chapel and settled into that faith community as a family. When the lead pastor moved on Andy served on the transitional leadership team.

The transitional team reworked the church's vision and values and had significant congregational participation in the process. Andy discovered that he "resonated with the vision and values that had been put together." During the pastoral vacancy Andy carried some of the teaching and preaching load. After his stints in the pulpit, a group of "little old ladies" would whisper, "Have you ever thought about being the pastor?"

This was something that he had never considered, however, he described being at a "loose end." So he submitted an application for the vacant post. In light of the number of applications that Granville Chapel processed together combined with him having no lead pastor experience, he did not think he would be offered the position. However, in Andy's words, "The day came when they said, "The short list is very short – it's you!" And I said, "Uh, what does a pastor do?"²⁸

Two dynamics are of note, here, the intertwining of frustration and conflict and then resonance with new story emerging in the life of Granville Chapel.

The significance of these findings and their practical application for the life and mission of a renaissance leader will be explored in Chapter Six.

²⁸ This comment "Uh, what does a pastor do?" could be taken simply as self-deprecating humour. However, there is a thread in the Perrett interview of humility revealed in comments like "I'm a generalist which means I don't do much well." He also remarked in the interview "most of the good ideas have not been (sic) me."

Lessons from Navigating the Change Process

Kotter's pathway was used as a normative framework to assess how the leader cultivated organizational change. As noted previously John Kotter advocates an eight step sequence.²⁹

The majority of subjects came into broken congregations where trust was low and missional engagement was weak or negligible. The leaders all clearly articulated the congregational conditions they faced when stepping into point leadership. The consistent honest appraisal of the state of their respective congregations gives weight to the Stockdale paradox cited in the Literature Survey. "Retain faith that you will prevail, in the end, regardless of the difficulties. AND at the same time- Confront the most brutal facts of your own reality whatever they might be."³⁰

Perrett alluded to the sigmoid curve as descriptive of Granville Chapel. The preceding lead pastor had presided over a "peak", and subsequent to the predecessor's departure, the congregation began to experience numerical decline. Perrett also noted that while Granville Chapel had a strong interest in foreign missions the only obvious contradiction to a lack of "collective missional vision" was an ESL class. As noted below missional torpor was further evidenced by inward looking home groups.

Scott Weatherford assessed that the church's self-perception of its health and vitality and the actual state of affairs were two different things. He identified the

²⁹ Kotter identifies a pathway, or "action plan", for leading through change with his 8 stage process

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Creating the guiding coalition
3. Developing a vision and strategy
4. Communicating the change vision
5. Empowering (people) for broad based action
6. Generating short-term wins
7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

³⁰ Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001), 86.

congregation as declining and evangelistically impotent with no vision or strategy. In a similar vein Thomson reported that when he took the helm of C4 Church it was weak and visionless.

Phillip Vallely understood that he stepped into the leadership of a congregation in need of recovery from a troubled season. The church had run fruitful Alpha Courses amongst immigrants through offering the course in multiple languages. However, despite this, Vallely assessed that the congregation had not owned the Alpha initiative introduced by his predecessor. He related that evangelism and reaching the lost were not congregational priorities.

Further contextual clarity and candor was voiced by Rob Dyck at Arnold Community Church and Dave Smith at Crossway. Dyck described spiritual health and vitality as “rock bottom” when he arrived to assume pastoral leadership. Smith, the church planter apprentice-cum-pastor, described the congregation as change resistant, in turmoil and “extremely distrusting” and “extremely internally focused.”

One pastor, Matthew Price, was a notable exception to the majority. He assumed senior leadership of a stable congregation where his predecessor had served in the lead role for 17 years. Price claimed that the church had high levels of health and missional vitality. The church had been planted in 1987, with a lot of the core people still active participants with a heart for mission. Even in this stable, healthy environment Price identified the need for organizational change. When Price and the North Langley Community Church leadership set about redefining the church’s core values, two interrelated issues came to the surface, “a sense of wanting to be a church on its knees” and “sensitive to the Spirit.” Price recounted a two-year journey since his installation of

“developing a deep heart for prayer.” Matthew Price has a conviction that “discipleship begins in prayer” and part of the change journey has involved new expressions of corporate prayer.

Two leaders stepped into congregational leadership where intentional transition work had already been done. Granville Chapel had assembled a transitional team which made organizational and theological changes. Granville had its roots in the Plymouth Brethren and therefore its theological operating system was complementarian. The transitional team tackled this and the congregation now has women in every leadership sphere. In part through the influence of the Alpha Course, Granville Chapel has embraced charismatic gifts and prayer ministry. The Alpha Canada National Director is part of the congregation and her presence and leadership has been influential. Andy Perrett was actually part of the transitional team, and eventually became the point leader. Perrett noted in his interview that the transitional team had a great deal of participation from the church community in working on the new values, vision and direction. Thus a lot of “buy in” had been purchased from the Chapel prior to Andy’s appointment.

Waterloo MB hired an intentional transitional pastor to navigate and support change and help identify a new lead pastor. The transitional pastor served for 18 months. Prior to this, the church had a shepherd-teacher as lead pastor who served for almost a decade. Prior to him, an evangelist served as lead pastor who would preach the gospel and give altar calls on a consistent basis. It was reported that the church began to suffer from evangelism fatigue and took a pendulum swing away from this particular approach by hiring the shepherd-teacher. Under the reign of the latter leader social action and

social justice became prominent and evangelism receded and a gospel voice became muted.

These transitional approaches are important to note because Andy Perrett at Granville Chapel and Chris Stevens at Waterloo MB stepped into leadership roles where much preparatory work for increased missional engagement had already been done. Chris Stevens, however, illustrates that much work had yet to be done and that he needed to assume the role of renaissance leader. He recounted that the church would give away gas station gift cards to people in the community. He was dismayed that there was no mention of the church or of Jesus in this “outreach.” His concern was not that the giveaway did not promote the church but that there was no attempt to do these community events in Jesus’ name and to make him known.

In the run up to his first Easter in charge Stevens was presiding over a staff meeting with a prepared agenda. Knowing that Easter always creates an upsurge of guests and visitors and therefore unbelieving pre-Christians, he asked the seventeen staff in the room how many of them had ever led someone to Jesus. Three or four raised their hands. He responded by uttering a mild profanity and asking the same question and getting the same response. Stevens then ditched the staff agenda and proceeded to conduct evangelistic training. He brought impromptu teaching on the gospel and much to the staff’s initial consternation had them role playing two activities: sharing the gospel and leading each other to Christ. The fruit of Stevens’s missional moxie is that subsequent to this, the staff have been empowered to share the gospel and some staff have enjoyed the privilege of baptizing the people they have personally led to Christ.

The Need for Urgency

Kotter advocates the first step in the change journey as “establishing a sense of urgency.”³¹ Jon Thomson readily responded to this question by stating that he used the pulpit as a vehicle for “painting very vivid pictures.” He also used this platform and personal conversations to repeatedly drum home the idea that “the status quo was not good enough.”

Like Thomson, Colin van der Kuur intentionally communicated the reality of the state of things and how this unsatisfactory state of affairs necessitated change.

However, this approach was not uniform. Rob Dyck, who in his interview revealed a knowledge of Kotter, by quoting the Harvard business guru, took a different tack. He decided he needed to build trust first. “I don’t think I instilled a whole lot of urgency at the beginning because I needed to get some change in the bank.”

Dyck had identified that a change process costs trust currency. The issue of building relational equity is therefore important. This is something Robert Gray attended to instinctively when he arrived at a broken congregation. He showed up at birthday parties, barbecues, games, and dinners and spent a great deal of time with people. This was something his predecessor had not done. The previous pastor was largely a Sunday presence who did not intersect with people in the rhythms and routines of their lives. Robert’s actions were not politically motivated, but resulted in building relational equity. This capital is required to navigate congregational change.

Robert Gray identified a false urgency in his flock fuelled by self-preservation and saw the task of instilling urgency as involving “paint(ing) a better future that was worth jumping into.” As a leader he had no desire to preside over the death of a

³¹ John Kotter, *Leading Change*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 35-50.

congregation. In his interview he drew on the Biblical narrative of Israel's Egyptian captivity and the Exodus, claiming that his congregation had been in Egypt. Gray saw casting vision as part of the discipline of instilling urgency. "Just to get out of Egypt to spend (the future) in the desert made no sense whatsoever," Gray remarked.

Delbert Enns took the helm of a seeker driven church. He described this as, "7 steps ,21 steps, do this and you will have a great week." He spoke to the question regarding instilling urgency with a theological response by claiming that his church had lost sight of the gospel. He claimed congregational urgency was instilled through recovering a Christocentric focus in the teaching ministry. He went further in describing the spiritual ecosystem. He claimed he had to contend with "a systemic issue ...we had removed the centrality of the gospel. Even speaking about the cross was something that didn't happen at our church very often."

Enns identified and addressed a very real challenge for renaissance leaders, the need for congregational recalibration around the centrality of the gospel. He spoke of changing the congregational language. Changing language is part of the congregational change challenge since language is the road map to culture. Enns claims that re-centering around the gospel brought about urgency. The issue of re-centering around the gospel will be picked up on further in Chapter Six.

In a response that parallels that of Delbert Enns, Vancouver based Andy Perrett responded that, "missional urgency has really come out of people being discipled and people discovering the gospel is real and that fuels a motivation for being church and doing church in a way that people can own."

Dave Smith claims that he did not have to infuse a sense of urgency since the split and its ensuing fallout meant "...we were already in an extremely urgent situation. The church was imploding." Phil Collins claimed that he also inherited a congregation with a sense of urgency due to its instability, and its growing reputation as "the big church with big debt."

John Neufeld proved to be a contrarian voice, claiming that instilling change urgency would have been "unhelpful" and that he did not do so. "I probably tried to instill urgency about commitment and maturity and stability. ... People were change-oriented but they were change-fatigued." Neufeld in his own words did infuse urgency, a necessary urgency prior to embarking on a new path. He stepped into a church that had been a gathered city center seeker driven flagship. The eldership had been passive or disinterested about discipleship. Neufeld outlined this challenge. "There were founding elders who said if people come to faith here and go somewhere else to be discipled they were perfectly fine with that because at least we were being an evangelistic church. There was no commitment to discipleship or a formation pathway following conversion."

Neufeld's approach is still, despite his claims to the contrary, in synch with Kotter's assertion that the first step in an organizational shift is creating urgency about culture change. Neufeld set about instilling urgency about personal growth, personal transformation and the need for a disciple-making culture to be established.

Ken Shigematsu was unsure if, 19 years ago when he took the helm of Tenth Alliance if he set about instilling a sense of urgency.

Phil Valletly, who assumed leadership of a middle class congregation in a town in rural southern Manitoba, responded to this question by exclaiming how long ago the

change process began. He then reflected that exposing his middle class flock to community needs was how he went about creating a sense of urgency. Valletly took the missional step of identifying what was broken in the community and then through a commitment to collaboration and communication called the church outwards. This eventually resulted in partnership with the city and the development of a community center.

From these leaders it can be seen that Kotter's first step holds true as part of a normative framework. Respondents such as Enns, Neufeld and Perrett corroborate church turnaround guru Bill Easum's conviction about what is needed to get out of the starting blocks in a change journey. As indicated prior, in Chapter Two, Easum proposes a nine-step change process.³² He raises the issue for a congregation that there may be steps required before Kotter's "first" step! Easum contends that the first order of business is to develop a solid community of faith with spiritual leaders. This proposal finds expression in the stories of the three leaders cited above and their respective congregations.

The Guiding Coalition

All of the leaders interviewed had either an instinctive or cognitive understanding that for culture change to take root in the life of their established congregation they had to assemble key change leaders to guide the process forward. The details of how they went about this varied.

In the search process, John Neufeld identified that his executive pastor was a key player. Even before he was hired Pastor John made it clear that he expected Bob to stay in place. At the same time, Neufeld presided over a changing of the guard as he built his

³² Exponential Workshop April 24, 2013.

guiding coalition. He recounted: “All of the founding elders and a couple of the others that were in the center of much of the conflict of the previous three years agreed that they would voluntarily exit eldership within 12-16 months. So there was a leadership turnover there that was natural and gracious, not based on conflict. That was something that we achieved in agreement before I came. They still needed to follow through on it and they all did.”

This gave John time and space to assemble a new team to guide the change journey. He sought out highly relational people who were emotionally healthy and mature and who carried trust currency because they had not been in the thick of church conflict. Neufeld’s approach illustrates that leadership turnover may be required to move into a new season of vitality. It also points to the idea that the key stakeholders required to sustain the change project may require fresh talent and that they may have to be identified from an “unpublished organizational chart.”

Scott Weatherford saw the first order of business in building the guiding coalition was “to get the board on side.” Weatherford also repositioned staff and terminated staff and claimed that 75% of the staff had a job change. This points to the reality that necessary and effective change for turnaround may require significant turnover and experiencing the personal and relational cost of this.

Not all of the leaders cited prayer as part of this change step, but both Paul Johnson at South Delta Baptist and Ken Shigematsu did at Tenth Alliance. Both were clear on prayer fueling the process of identifying and recruiting key stakeholders and getting them on board. Johnson stated, with some feeling, “I prayed desperate prayers for leaders.” His church had been through significant turmoil which had followed on the

heels of an unhealthy parting of the ways with his predecessor. This had also sparked a significant exodus with 200-300 people leaving with the previous senior pastor. The leadership pool shrunk and those who remained were burnt out. Paul turned to prayer while calling the church to mission and church planting and this resonated with some newcomers. Johnson disavows any “magic formula” claiming he prayed a lot and consistently cast vision.

Ken Shigematsu enjoys the rhythm of having study leave and vacation during the summer. He also regularly takes time away from the ongoing demands of ministry for prayerful reflection on vision and discerning God’s direction. Ken offered the disclaimers that his approach is not particularly democratic and “not the most ideal to be emulated.” In his interview he recounted an approach where he returns either from his summer or a prayer and reflection break and then articulates that vision to his key stakeholders. He then invites input and feedback. He stated, “If I feel strongly about a vision and then ask our senior stakeholders and senior staff to embrace something they almost always do. If they don’t, they tend to leave which is okay I think too. “

In this step Jon Thomson conceded that he “failed a ton” and that he “hired and fired” and “cried a lot.” Phil Collins wrestled with the realities of falling church income and the need for spiritual renewal, so he tackled what he labelled “financial transformation” as well as the need to embark on a process of “casting an active living relationship with Christ.” He therefore built guiding coalitions in both spheres, which are interrelated as Jesus indicated.³³ Collins approached a church in unsustainable debt and in need of spiritual and missional renewal by working with existing staff and board members and key ministry leaders. The financial demands merited weekly meetings with

³³ Matthew 6:21.

elders, the finance director and key ministry leaders to consistently and transparently keep them in the loop. Meetings that focused on change were always heavily populated with board members. While this was happening he also appointed a prayer coordinator to raise the prayer temperature and fuel the renewal journey. In addition, Pastor Phil initiated Hearing God seminars and Encounter God weekends. He estimates that some 600 people went through this renewal track.

The investment in getting key stakeholders on board was varied in its execution. Chris Stevens got a list of key stakeholders from the executive pastor who had served the church for 17 years. He then spent the next six months having a lunch meeting each week with a stakeholder. He like all the others worked closely with his board in the process. This was uniformly adopted as a step in the change journey by all leaders except one.³⁴

Pulpit Power and the Word of God

As noted, for some subjects Scripture spoke into their assumption of leadership. All of the subjects cited Scriptures and Biblical themes that sustained them in the turbulence of organizational change. This dimension of personal sustenance will be addressed below as part of the discussion of spiritual renewal.

With the exception of only one³⁵ of the 15 pastors interviewed all of the interview subjects used the pulpit strategically to call for congregational transformation and cast

³⁴ It seems that Pastor David Smith neglected this step or did not give sufficient weight to this step in the change process. He faced a unique challenge. The planting pastor was still on staff and ostensibly did not want to lead the church he founded but continued to exercise a great deal of influence.

³⁵ Pastor John Neufeld was the contrarian sounding a dissonant note about the pulpit's power to fuel congregational change. He claimed that he is a shepherd and uses the pulpit to be transparent and relational and that he "wouldn't have described his preaching in any sense as visionary calling for a program change." While his assessment of his preaching must be taken at face value, his self-evaluation of his leadership gifting is at variance with his APEST. John is an ES (31/29) an evangelist-shepherd. When

vision. In other words, 93% of the respondents identified the pulpit as a strategic vehicle not only to proclaim the gospel and expound the Word, but to cast vision and call for a culture shift. Pastor Ken Shigematsu's pastorate at Tenth Avenue Alliance spans two decades now. Ken used the pulpit in the early years "to communicate a new direction." He is no longer engaging in the formative work of calling Tenth out of its broken past and isolation from its diverse Vancouver mission field. Ken recounted that, "new streams are constantly emerging within the rubric of the larger vision that will probably be unchanged." Every year or so, Tenth Church will have a focused emphasis. One such emphasis was investing in children, under the slogan, "Fullness of life for every child. "To bring energy and focus to that ministry emphasis a "multi-pronged approach" is deployed. This includes video, testimonies, recommended reading, web resources, Tenth's in-house magazine, Epic, and includes sermons where the truth and wisdom of Scripture is brought to bear on the issue. Scripture is used to call the congregation to engagement with and commitment to the church-wide emphasis.³⁶

Scott Weatherford had to gain greater access to the pulpit. When he arrived he was only preaching 30%-40% of the time. His predecessor was on staff as the teaching pastor. The different voices brought different emphases. Scott remarked that it was like taking two steps forward and one step back. Scott would "teach and lead in the vision of relationship-based disciple making ". The teaching pastor brought the voice of academia into the pulpit. Scott bemoaned this, because as a savvy change agent, he understood the

asked to identify what he would do differently if given a "mulligan", he claimed he would have used stronger vision language in the pulpit.

³⁶ David Minor's testimony bears witness to the continued power of the pulpit at Tenth. He is now working amongst aboriginal youth and a pivotal moment or spiritual tipping point came through Pastor Mellissa Ewing's sermon on John 10:1-10 during the church-wide emphasis (or campaign) on "Fullness of Life for Every Child" – see <http://www.tenth.ca/news/when-our-plans-fail>.

power of preaching. He grasped the power of the pulpit and the opportunity and platform it affords to cast vision of a preferred future. Two years in, he was able to make a shift and assume the role as primary preaching voice. He began to “teach systematically what it means to follow Jesus and to follow him together.” At this point Scott recounts that the truth was delivered on three levels: corporate level in the worship gatherings, small groups and personal reading plans. At the same time further reinforcement was brought about through the design of leadership development materials. These were taught around mega-themes of connecting, growing, sharing, and serving.

Phil Collins identified this as a growth area for himself but affirmed the use of the pulpit to fuel church change.” You have to preach and use the pulpit and preach the direction you want to go. If you aren’t preaching the direction you want to go through your sermons, the people aren’t hearing the heartbeat and the direction of the way you want to lead the church. ...you need to allow your exegesis and your thematic preaching to help drive the vision that God has given you for this community and what God has called you to in terms of his plan.”

Jon Thomson recalled,” Using sermon series to change the culture was significant...I view preaching as a point not only of information dispersal but that preaching can actually change the environment and culture. I prayed and I brought everything I could to the table through intentional sermon series to change the culture. “Jon eventually brought implementers around him because he identified that declaring a God-inspired vision without follow through led to distrust.

Jon claimed to use the pulpit to cast vision.” All the time, all the time...regularly I would call people to renewal and revival, which the outcome would of course be that. So

when I would preach through Acts or Romans or the Sermon on the Mount, it's always leading back to this spiritual culture of vitality, which in the end always produces numeric change. Very intentionally weaving everything together.”

Paul Johnson also leaned on the pulpit and the power of the spoken Word.

Every sermon at the beginning for probably the first two years I had something in there about the vision - to the point where I probably stretched a few biblical points around a little bit. You would have been hard pressed to have heard a sermon that didn't include the fact that this is why we are church planting, this is why we are doing a community dinner, this is why we are over in India starting to work on a school over there... It just became part of every sermon. I wanted people to understand the whys of it biblically and together because when they started to understand how important it was in the eternal aspect of people needing Christ then they were able to give up some of their minor stuff for a bigger picture.

Matthew Price introduced “Vision 2017” to NLCC, which included a new prayer focus, a commitment to church planting and a capital campaign to support the renovation of the building. He took two preaching series to cast vision. The first was a month long sermon series tackling the new values that supported the new direction. He preached on a church on our knees, living the gospel, shared lives, and generous love. This was followed up by a stewardship series about generosity and how to use finances in a God honoring way. During the latter sermon series, he called for the congregation to tithe and to give to the vision fund.

Robert Grey used the pulpit to “dribble (sic) feed.” He claims that he did not preach a visionary series or sermon to declare where the church was headed. He did intentionally change language and vocabulary. He declared “Our God is a missionary God. “He redefined ecclesiology as people on mission and once a year would preach his

annual report rather than delivering it at the annual business meeting.³⁷ In the latter forum a small group of people interested in the minutia of budgets, nuts and bolts would show up. When he preached the annual report he did so as part of a regular worship gathering.

In contrast to Robert Gray's minimalist use of the pulpit, Chris Stevens has preached sermon series on the vision at Waterloo MB Church. Stevens also leveraged the power of story. As Waterloo MB's leadership began to grapple with the implications of becoming a disciple making church, they pressed into the question what does a 10-year disciple look like? In other words, what are the behaviors, attitudes and practices of someone who has been at Waterloo MB for a decade and what are the processes to cultivate this disciple? These 15 characteristics will be reported on below under "missional markers." Further reflection on the implications of Waterloo MB's attempts to clarify transforming disciple making will be offered in Chapter 6.

As the leadership focused on people development and clarifying the kind of people Jesus wants to produce through WMB, Stevens voiced this new emphasis from the pulpit. He reported that God stories and stories of life transformation that demonstrated the 15 characteristics they had identified were given air time. Stevens preached and is preaching through the 15 characteristics and uses the power of the story of a congregant who is living the characteristic to reinforce the vision and direction and fresh intentionality around disciple making.

Colin Van der Kuur described using his pulpit to call the church to embrace their community as a mission field. Other respondents proved more specific in their answers

³⁷ While the idea of preaching the annual report maximizes its communication sphere, Robert by his own admission did not use the pulpit as a significant vehicle for direction setting and while he introduced concepts like the missionary nature and character of God and missional ecclesiology, it seems he under-communicated these from the pulpit.

citing the intentional use of books of the Bible, and passages to speak into the life of the congregation.

Dave Smith stepped into a congregation that prized expositional preaching. Coming into a congregation, reeling from a seismic church split he preached through Nehemiah, as they attempted to rebuild the congregation. In the midst of turbulence and change, the church was reminded of the greatness and faithfulness of God through a series in Isaiah, ‘Behold Our God.’ David then moved into Acts for sixteen months to support a “culture shift from being an inward-oriented church to an outward-oriented church.” David labeled the Acts series, “Witness”, and described it as essential. He then preached through Ephesians in an attempt to establish individual and corporate identity “in Christ” and work through the implications of that.

Phillip Valletly also used pulpit power.

We preached through Nehemiah, we preached through Galatians. Nehemiah from a rebuilding, restructuring, planning perspective. We preached through Galatians primarily for the purpose of the Gospel, which is something we now plan to revisit at least once every year – these sections of Galatians, just to really reinforce the idea, “Jesus + Nothing = Everything.” It’s about Jesus and that’s why we do what we do.

Rob Dyck commented,” whether we are working through a book of the Bible or a portion of Scripture, out of God’s Word I have the opportunity to talk about this God of mission and share God’s heart, which then allows me to kind of apply it in a very, very local sense.” In his thirteen-year tenure the congregation has gone through two intentional Refocusing journeys.³⁸ The second time around he felt very strongly

³⁸ This is an intentional two-pronged revitalization offered by the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches where a coach will work with both the leadership of the church and the congregation with the stated aim of hearing from God about the health and direction of the church. See <http://www.mennonitebrethren.ca/service/refocusing/>.

impressed to preach on the Seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3 and relates the strengths, challenges and failings of these ancient churches to his own congregation.

Andy Perrett at Granville Chapel had worked with stakeholders and leadership on new language and new emphases: discipleship, mission, multiplication and leadership development. The church adopted a new mission statement:” We want to be a spiritually vibrant community, transformed by God’s love and extending his Kingdom in our city and around the world.” Andy explains that this was a three-dimensional emphasis: up, in and out³⁹ – “spiritual vibrancy being our connection with God, that’s the “up”; transformed by God...we realize that that only happens in community, so that’s the “in”; and then the “out” is extending God’s kingdom in our city and around the world.”

One of the challenges Perrett faced was how to infuse missional engagement into the community groups. Some of the groups had been longstanding with an inward focus on “fellowship” and Bible study and the idea of an outward dimension such as serving the community or blessing the neighborhood was not on their radar Granville initially adopted Michael Frost’s acrostic BELLS as a framework to support missional practices., Frost⁴⁰, offers BELLS, as a way of measuring missional engagement in the rhythm of a week. The behaviors are Bless, Eat, Listen, Learn and Sent. This can be infused into a discipleship group as a mean of fueling missional impulse. Frost advocates blessing 3 people in a week one a believer, one an unbeliever and the third person can be either. Recognizing the power of hospitality, eating involves sharing meals with three people. Listen involves a weekly discipline of silence of at least one unbroken hour. Learning

³⁹ This approach to disciple-making and mission is espoused by 3 DM but this ministry and its literature was not referenced or acknowledged. See <http://www.3dmovements.com/> .

⁴⁰ Michael Frost, *Surprise The World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People* (Colorado Springs: Nav Press, 2016).

raises the issue of immersion in Scripture, especially the gospels, and asks what have I learned from Jesus this week? Sent raises an accountability question around missional engagement. Where have I followed Jesus and where have I resisted Jesus this week?

The Granville Chapel leadership decided to hit the reset button and coin their own missional language. Andy used the pulpit to “unlearn” BELLS and to teach on BLESS. This re-spun acronym was employed to help move people on mission. BLESS means: Beginning in prayer; Listen to God and listen to the people you are interacting with; Eat with people; Serve and Share the story. This framework was supported from the pulpit. Firstly, Andy untaught BELLS and taught BLESS. He used the pulpit to dismantle the old operating system, and to offer a new acrostic, with new language to support a missional framework.

” We’ve just had to hammer away through our sermons and try to keep referencing, telling stories in our sermons, getting stories that will envision the congregation for the possible. I think when we have done that it’s actually been really effective. “

Developing a Vision and Strategy

The interviewees varied in how they landed on vision and strategy but all communicated a sense of vision and strategy.

Andy Perrett attended an Alpha Global Leadership conference in the UK. This proved pivotal in birthing a new dream for Granville Chapel. At the invitation of a plenary speaker all the delegates were invited to write a crazy big dream for their church. The dream had to be so far “out there” that it would be scary. As Perrett reflected on this,

he pondered what might prove so big that it would frighten him. He wrote “Planting 10 churches in 10 years.” When he shared with his leadership team what he had learned at the conference, he introduced his Post It Note. He expected this to be dismissed as ludicrous. The leadership team, however, responded with, “Why not?” Perrett believes the “seed of future progress was buried” in that moment in London and in the Post It Note. Granville Chapel is now on a church planting trajectory.⁴¹

One interviewee responded to the question, “What is God’s dream for your church? And how did you discern it?” by describing lengthy processes of identifying a mission statement.⁴²

Phillip Vallelly’s dream discernment involved him getting under the skin and into the soul of the small town in which the church is located. He began a community exegesis process and met with social services, civic leaders, the mayor, librarians and the chief of police in order to get a handle on the community. He used a third party to collate and condense his responses from the community. At the same time, he assembled a church health assessment team to evaluate congregational life and vitality. Here, the engagement with community needs and the attempt to discern what God was already doing in the community gave some impetus towards an externally focused vision for ministry.⁴³

⁴¹ As of Spring 2016, Granville has planted two Chinese congregations, sent out a couple who are planting in Fresno, California; are in discussions about planting in Peru and are having preliminary conversations about planting in nearby Surrey, BC in an urban area of multiple deprivations.

⁴² “Because of the Gospel, Crossway Church exists to make disciples who: love Jesus, love His people, and live to make him known – all to the glory of God.” Perhaps somewhat defensively – he offered this,” not as a way of avoiding the question, but as a way of genuinely answering it.” This respondent *did not answer the question despite his claims to the contrary*. This propositional statement did not and does not paint a picture of a preferred future but rather, revealed a dream deficiency.

⁴³ This outward journey involved serving their own small town Winkler directly and inner city Winnipeg—the expressions of missional engagement are noted under missional markers in this chapter and Vallelly’s approach to dream discernment is explored for its application to practical theology in chapter six.

Rob Dyck, like Phillip Vallely, pastors a rural Mennonite Brethren Church. Dyck also took a collaborative approach to discerning God's dream for the church.⁴⁴ Chris Stevens spoke of prayer fueling the process of stepping into God's dream for Waterloo MB and also struck a collaborative note. He recounted that discerning God's new dream for the church involved, "discerning the voice of God in community with the Board." This should not be construed as management by committee. Stevens exercised strong leadership in the change journey. When asked how he dealt with structures, systems and behaviors that worked against change he responded that he did so by being very clear who he is and very clear about the new direction.

Paul Johnson was quick to disavow the new dream for the church as his dream. He claimed that the new dream came through the hearts and minds of several people. He revealed a collaborative approach to visioning when he stated, "I had an idea of where we should go, but I made sure the staff and elders and congregation all had a part in the process."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Mennonite Brethren have historically been congregationally governed and have also prized an Anabaptist distinctive, "community hermeneutic." This includes the idea that God speaks through the faith community and not just to the leader. This theological distinctive if honoured within a congregation will tend to give impetus to a collaborative approach to visioning and direction setting. Thus, Pastor Rob Dyck who is a "high A" apostolic leader stated in his interview: "we came together in a refocusing process, which involves prayer and community discernment, listening well to each other and to the Holy Spirit and seeing again what God says in His Word about this God of mission and his plan for the local church." The Mennonite World Conference in 2006 offers this statement about Scripture as a guide "As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in light of Jesus Christ to discern God's will for our obedience." Here we see an emphasis on a *communal interpretation of Scripture*. The change leader needs to be cognizant of how this theological lens will affect his ability to cast vision and set direction.

⁴⁵ Johnson's interview response also reveals that he had an awareness of three spheres where he had to exercise influence and solicit buy in: the elders, the staff team that he supervised- but did not have full authority over and the congregation. This requires an ability to dance well because SDBC is congregationally governed – "where the congregation collectively holds final authority under Christ"; the elders are not ruling elders but *representatives of the congregation*. Congregational clout is seen in the by-laws that stipulate the congregation: approves elders, the call of pastors, any changes to constitution and bylaws and budget approval.

Delbert Enns spoke of the dream quest coming out of his own personal life in two dimensions. Firstly, he described a growing relationship with and desire for Jesus. Secondly, Enns communicated his growing realization that his original posture was off base. Enns came into the role as lead pastor thinking that he had the “answer(s) for the church.” He relates that he had to go through an “unlearning” and wake up to the fact that he could not rescue the church and that he did not have the antidote for the church’s ills.

Jon Thomson’s dramatic call journey is noted above and the discernment process could be described as similarly dramatic. He describes the discernment process of identifying God’s new dream for C4 Church as “sudden, unexpected” and “invasion-like” and that it “wrecked their theology.”⁴⁶ Thomson and C4 Church were both *Surprised by The Voice of God*.⁴⁷ For Thomson, consulting the LORD, prayer, silence, solitude, discernment and inviting God to speak are the elements that fueled the journey into a new congregational dream. These practices also characterize the leadership culture and ongoing decision making at C4. E.G., the day of the interview with Jon Thomson mentioned that he and his executive pastor had a meeting. These two leaders form the Pastoral Lead Team, and in a throw away remark Thomson said, “we consulted the Lord on three major issues.” For C4 Church Leadership having heard from God, the next step is to build plans based on their discernment of God’s leading.

⁴⁶ As already noted C4 Church was a historically conservative evangelical cessationist congregation. Thomson’s call journey contradicts this theological category and C4 has moved beyond the stultifying confinements of cessationism to embrace charismatic empowerment and its leadership functions with the expectation and practise that God speaks today and that he does so with directional clarity.

⁴⁷ This is the title of a book by former Dallas Theological Seminary professor, Jack Deere who journeyed out of DTS’s historic dispensationalism with its disavowal of charismatic and revelatory gifts. Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996). The book and its subtitle – how God speaks today through prophecies, dreams and visions, offer a narrative and a theology that both Thomson and his congregation have journeyed into in something of a Canadian parallel.

Communication

As noted in the Literature Survey, previously in Chapter Two, Kotter claims that most change projects are derailed by significant under-communication. Chris Stevens worked with his board, preached the vision and direction, and had a sequence of lunches with stakeholders. Phil Collins spoke of creating a transparent culture of open communication and stressed the importance of this in light of Willow Park's significant financial challenges when he came on board. Paul Johnson demonstrated collaborative leadership and as the church attempted to move from its broken past and embrace an outward focus and specifically church planting, Johnson communicated at different levels. As noted, Johnson used the pulpit as a vehicle to communicate a directional shift. He also conducted a series of town halls some of which proved bruising. The town hall meetings at SDBC gave people the opportunity to air their opinions, voice concerns and ask questions of Paul and the leadership.

Johnson demonstrated the wisdom and commitment to identify who was affected by congregational changes and to seek them out and explain and listen. One episode illustrates Johnson's commitment to open communication as part of his leadership style. One summer, he decided, in light of the seasonal attendance dip to close off the church balcony. He discovered that this affected some families with young children and an elderly woman with failing eye sight who used the balcony because of their particular needs and challenges. He met with the affected parties to discuss what for some might be deemed a minor or negligible change. Johnson illustrates the need for the change agent to identify who is affected by change and what needs to be communicated to them.

Kotter's change paradigm was upheld as a normative framework for leading through change. The subjects all demonstrated the power and value of celebrating short term wins. Rob Dyck acknowledged the importance of consolidating the new values and approaches. He indicated that this was a work-in-progress and the focus of both prayer and leadership team discussion. The need for renaissance leaders to have an intentional change process will be revisited in Chapter Six.

Further Lessons in Leading Through Change

Prepare for Opposition

Phillip Valletly claims that Winkler MB Church is mostly “un-political”, that he never experienced significant open opposition and that any opposition to congregational change was subterranean. An alternative story line is that passive-aggressive Canadian Mennonite Brethren chose not to deal directly with an assertive Irishman! Scott Weatherford, a larger than life Floridian who pastored First Alliance Church in Calgary, gives weight to the alternative perspective. Weatherford noted this in his change journey: “Passive-aggressive resistance was normative. It's part of their culture. I would prefer just open aggression. I had to learn to speak the language of sarcasm and had to be wise enough to understand that it may be passive but it's still aggressive.” Phil Collins concurs with this assessment, as an Englishman, who travelled extensively across Canada for many years before settling into local church leadership, he remarked, “I think in Canadian culture, the opposition isn't very evident; it's quite passive.”

Paul Johnson experienced opposition when he introduced the idea of his congregation wading into church planting. He recalled a few rough town halls and stated,

“you have to listen and let them yell at you and not get angry because they just care about the church.”

A couple of respondents had to deal with internal opposition from dissident and divisive staff. Dave Smith was the target of a concerted campaign by some who had left the church. The opposition faced as a 24-year-old church planting apprentice thrust into the lead role left “profound scars.” He experienced accusation regarding his motives, the undermining of his leadership and people complaining about the level of his remuneration. He was also the target of an internet campaign by a malcontent who had left during the church split. In an ironic turn of events, he was preaching thorough Nehemiah. The very week that he was expounding the passage where Gesham, Sanballat, and Tobiah published an open letter to the people of Jerusalem to intimidate them, scatter them and stop the work, five men wrote and mailed an open letter to the congregation maligning the leadership.

Rob Dyck recounted significant opposition and resistance to his leadership at the onset of his pastoral appointment. This opposition came from an entrenched old guard.

While I recognize the real enemy is the evil one, he was manifesting himself in the actions of people and within one month of arriving at Arnold, I had already begun praying very specifically that God would do one of three things to five specific people in our congregation. Change their hearts, move them on, or take them home, I prayed. I prayed that regularly. Those prayers did not always sound very sanctified but it was clear that there were some spiritual hurdles in our midst preventing freedom to worship, freedom to serve others, and freedom to grow.

Of note here are two things. Firstly, Rob Dyck recognized that the real source of opposition to the work of God was not unloving and recalcitrant old timers, but from invisible supernatural opposition.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”⁴⁸

Only Rob Dyck, Jon Thomson and Paul Johnson made definite mention of spiritual warfare as part of the challenge of renaissance leadership. Johnson’s awareness of the evil one’s activity is particularly jarring and is explored below as part of the examination of pain in the change journey. Thomson claimed, “there have been multiple demonic encounters here since 2005 that are well documented and that are indisputably evil.” The fact that only three leaders voiced this raises questions that will be examined in Chapter 6’s exposition of practical theology. The “minority voice” on warfare is striking because Jesus indicated that mission happens in the context of spiritual warfare.

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Secondly, Dyck’s response in the face of opposition is noteworthy. He prayed. He made the issue of opposition a focus of intercession. He recounts sometimes retreating to his office, getting on his knees and weeping before the LORD.

Difficult people, difficult issues, Jim Cymbala's book “Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire” and probably a host of other things brought our leadership back to our knees to be a people of prayer, a people who seek first the Lord to guide our steps. You see, it’s not our ministry, it’s His and therefore we need to seek direction from Him as to how He wants us to steward the ministry to which He has called us. And so we try to pray about everything.

⁴⁸ Ephesians 6:12.

⁴⁹ Luke 10 where Jesus commissions the 72 as agents of the kingdom to speak his words and do his works. Note the spiritual warfare emphases in Luke 10:3 and Luke 10:17-20.

Prepare for Turnover or Anticipate an Exodus

Jon Thomson reported three exoduses, across a seven-year span, at C4 Church which he claimed were almost all stakeholders. The first C4 exodus was theological as the leadership defined positions on “women in ministry, charismatic orientation and social justice.” The second exodus was brought about by vision specificity. The leadership declared that God had called C4 to become a regional church of 10,000 reaching and serving the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of people in Jesus’ Name.⁵⁰ This vision clarity triggered a second exodus. The third exodus came about through the dynamics of organizational development as structural changes were introduced to move the church from a congregation of 1,000 to 3,000. Thomson is clear about the power of vision to energize, attract and to repel people. He commented, “The clearer you are on your vision and the clearer you are on what you are is the invitation to stay or go.”⁵¹

Rob Dyck saw an exodus in the first nine months of his pastorate, which he attributed to the hurt and fatigue of the turmoil prior to his arrival.

Phillip Vallelly is aware he cashed in a great deal of the trust currency he had accumulated when he made an announcement one Sunday. He announced to the 125-year-old congregation that there would be no more worship services in the sanctuary for the next 5 weeks. In an historic congregation where clericalism was rife, some people initially freaked out, because the pastor was not serving communion. Instead, people served each other and for the first time children and parents served each

⁵⁰ Here Thomson that former Board Chairs who had been part of the eldership that affirmed and voted “yes” to the 10,000 vision left the church.

⁵¹ Thomson regards the three exoduses at C4 Church as a gift since he claimed that they “gave the environment to actually become the church God has called us to be.”

other the Lord's Supper. In the 600 strong church the attendance during the first two weeks was strong, but began to dwindle. Valletly estimated that about 60 people left the church during this period and never returned.

In hindsight, while he knows he had "eight years of credit" with the congregation, he now questions the wisdom of his actions. He had led the way in pressing for a shift from a "member culture" to a "mission culture." Part of this shift was helping congregants realize that it's not all about the weekend, so he disrupted the predictable pattern of weekend worship gatherings as largely spectator events. Here, he demonstrates the necessary step of creating disequilibrium in a culture shift and that unfreezing the status quo does not come without a cost.

Instead of the standard worship format, the congregation gathered in the gym around tables for conversation, communion and discussion around portions of Nehemiah. The table talk focused around three shifts the leaders were calling Winkler MB Church to: a shift from a consumer culture to a contributing culture; a shift from being a program culture to a people culture; and a shift from church life to kingdom living. Those who gathered in the gym were invited to "name a highlight or challenge during the shift" and to share a highlight or challenge about their week. They prayed for each other and each week commissioned each other. This practice of commissioning each other on mission had been formerly reserved for short-term missions teams and vocational long-term missionaries.

All the interviewees reported congregational turnover. Colin van der Kuur reported a 25% exodus while some pastors reported minor exoduses.^{52 53}

⁵² Robert Grey, Chris Stevens and Matthew Price in their interviews reported little turnover. However, Price inherited a stable context in which his predecessor is still in the congregation and his predecessor's

While candidating for the lead role, John Neufeld predicted to the elders that across the first three years of his pastorate ,600 people would leave The Meeting Place, unless the Spirit of God disrupted this people shift. He accurately foretold a migration of 300 the first year, 200 in the second year and 100 in the third year. “The first year was the “Wildly Disenchanted”, the second year was “The Exhausted” and the third year was those that couldn’t get themselves shifting out of the old mode and philosophy of ministry to a new mode of philosophy and ministry. The third group just could not adapt to the changing culture, and according to Neufeld were neither hostile nor grumpy.

The Power of Outside-In Voices

Some of the pastors surveyed testified to the power of guides on the change journey. Ken Shigematsu enjoyed a mentoring relationship with Leighton Ford. Ken was two weeks into his pastorate when the church secretary came into his office and stated,” If the ship sinks now everyone will blame you because you were the last captain at the helm even though it’s not your fault.” Ken was deeply discouraged and sought out his mentor, who happened to be in Vancouver. Leighton spoke into Ken’s life with prophetic

wife is on staff. These larger than life presences may therefore create a continuity in the hearts and minds of parishioners. The congregation has grown numerically under Price’s leadership; this classic metric confers credibility on the attendant leader. Subsequent to his interview, Robert Gray has reported an exodus as he has pressed into a missional communities’ paradigm. Stevens reported that 3 or 4 families had left the church “that he was aware of.” Under his leadership, giving and attendance have climbed so this may mask or compensate for any back door exits. Stevens was preceded by an intentional interim pastor who brought about changes that obviously would not be debited from Pastor Chris’s trust account.

⁵³ Scott Weatherford reported an exodus of 3-4% which was outstripped by significant congregational growth. His congregation more than doubled in size during his five-year tenure, becoming the largest Canadian church in his denomination. He recounted to me that the growth protected him from the fallout created by significant and necessary staffing and structural changes and concluded that if the church had not been on a growth trajectory, the costly changes would have resulted in his termination! Scott recounts: “The congregation continued to grow. We lost some, probably 3-4%, but we were gaining 10-15% annually so the losses were stripped by the gains. In fact, when we finally got all the staff insurrection removed we started jumping by 30-40%. So we just had to invite people in, and if they kept resisting and they became openly divisive we had to terminate them. That was hard.”

wisdom.” Remember that God is an artist. He will not lead you to copy anyone else. So seek him for a unique vision for this place.”

Dave Smith had a coaching relationship with a veteran minister, as did Robert Gray. Robert also had a life coach and a mastermind team. Robert also became part of a 3DM learning community.⁵⁴ Reggie McNeal became a passive mentor for Phillip Vallely and the staff and leadership of Winkler MB Church through his writing.

Fuel for the Journey

The Sustaining Power of God’s Truth

The pastors interviewed were invited to share the biblical or theological truths that became bedrock convictions for them on the change journey. The leaders shared a variety of axioms, truths and Scriptures that they drew on to guide and support them through the change journey.⁵⁵ A couple of leaders articulated that truths they were already convinced of were amplified in the change journey. When asked to specify which truths *became* an anchor in the journey, Chris Stevens indicated there were no new truths. He did disclose the importance of theology and theological alignment for church staff. Previously he would have identified character, ethics, and competence as creating staff hygiene issues. He had taken a gospel foundation and theological congruence as a given, but revised his thinking in light of dealing with staff who were off-gospel and had been influenced by liberal theology.

⁵⁴ The 3DM group placed Robert in an ongoing facilitated peer learning community with other Canadian leaders on a similar missional journey. The group all comprised of senior leaders attempting to retrofit the 3dm paradigm of disciple making and missional communities into an established congregation. Sometimes the group met face to face. Other meetings were conducted via video

⁵⁵ The “bedrock truths” that the pastors recounted are recorded in Appendix 2.

The vital importance of the supremacy of Jesus, the centrality of Christ and the gospel were truths voiced by some. The need to build on a gospel foundation and the futility of building on any other foundation, was voiced. A couple of leaders cited the need for Holy Spirit empowerment and God's desire to empower. Others cited specific Scriptures that proved meaningful and offered strength. These leaders gave voice to the Psalmist's declaration, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path."⁵⁶

A couple of leaders articulated that they rested in the character of God, one stressing His goodness and another the Fatherhood of God. One leader made the oddly anthropocentric statement "that God thinks highly enough of me to include me in what he is doing." Another blended a pop psychology sound bite with the need to be vulnerable and surrendered when he stated that his conviction was "don't sweat the small stuff and be willing to die for your core convictions."

Sustaining Practices and Postures on the Journey

Chris Stevens cited daily devotions, the power of community and a home group which he and his wife hosted as sources of spiritual sustenance. Ken Shigematsu identified "the direct presence of the Spirit", contemplative practices and core relationships as fueling him across the years and challenges of his leadership at Tenth Avenue Alliance. Ken also noted that as a young single leader his early years at Tenth were characterized by overworking. In the early days of his pastorate he would work 80 hours and make nocturnal pit stops at a local fast food drive thru'. He related as a husband and now as a father he has learned to work smarter rather than harder. He

⁵⁶ Psalm 109:105.

identified journaling, practicing Sabbath and bicycling, sailing and swimming as part of his sustaining rhythm.

Shigematsu's commitment to physical exercise is something that will be picked up on in chapter six. In his interview he did make a case for intentional self-care, claiming it is the appropriate stewardship of the only gift you can give the world. He expressed his resonance with Parker Palmer's assertion that self-care is never a selfish act. Shigematsu makes a point that will be underscored in chapter 6.

John Neufeld bears witness to the power of holistic self-care. He spoke of he and his wife developing a couple of rich spiritual friendships with people outside the congregation and its demands. He also described the therapeutic power of building a cottage with his own bare hands and the focus that having a running chain saw in his hand demands. In the midst of the church transformation journey, John also set clear boundaries around a commitment that he would never be out more than two evenings a week.

The missional renewal of an established congregation is a perilous and demanding prospect. Two of the leaders reported experiences of burnout⁵⁷, one leader reported stress-induced panic attacks, and one leader is currently on a medical leave and is signed off until the end of 2016.

Another leader reported that in the demands of church transformation, his health was jeopardized. In the winter of 2011, he suffered a TIA⁵⁸ and described this episode as a "health crisis." He made changes in light of his health scare. However, as he reflected

⁵⁷ One leader took a month off with the full support of his elders as an extended Sabbath. The other leader in question had two "minor burnouts" and then in a third episode hit a physical and emotional wall. These episodes and the church's responses will be explored for their pragmatic implications in chapter six.

⁵⁸ Transient ischemic attack.

overall on his five year run as a renaissance leader, he also conceded,” I had a tendency to overwork and over-extend myself. I didn’t take to heart the soul care component like I should have.”

Another leader had experienced burnout in a previous role in 2000 due to drivenness and the pressure for success and an inner script that chanted, “failure is not an option.” After this burnout he took the opportunity to recalibrate his identity as a man, a Christ follower and a pastor.

Phil Collins is a man of prayer. He has recounted that as an evangelist with Youth for Christ, two decades ago, he “lost Jesus.” He had an epiphany in a strategic planning meeting that while he was in the thick of innovative outreach, and had a significant preaching platform, he was no longer functioning out of the overflow of deep affection for Jesus. He had lost the love affair with Jesus. He took the remedial step of blocking off the first Wednesday of each month as a “day with Jesus.” He developed the pattern of long prayer walks, extended Bible reading, journaling and conversations with God.

When Phil Collins was asked about how he discerned God’s dream for the church, his answer revealed an active dependency and pursuit of God. He also described an emerging culture of spiritual vitality:

I spent a lot of time in prayer. I took 12 mini retreats a year of about four days in length and spent time praying about the church. I ensured that I carved out significant periods in my daily schedule to pray and to journal. I think in that period I probably did three 40-day fasts of some sort. Of course, there were others. I have continued to try to develop a culture of prayer for those on the board, and over that period the board has changed. The board has taken on a high spiritual and dynamic nature, to the point where the board now would easily spend a whole night seeking God and doing listening prayer about a problem and that has become their first port of call (prayer). That was a process of nudging the board towards spiritual transformation.

Ken Shigematsu articulated an attentiveness to the Holy Spirit when he recounted:

“I began to seek God’s guidance for this place. One time in prayer I sensed the Spirit saying, “If you will bless those who cannot repay you, I will bless you [as a church].” Here Shigematsu is in synch with the summons and invitation in Revelation 2 and 3 to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches

John Neufeld rehearsed Scripture as part of his journey. He turned to Scriptures like Romans 8 that spoke into his heart to strengthen himself and remind himself of the gospel.

The Power of Personal Transformation

Changes in Heart and Life

Delbert Enns indicated that he needed to experience a conversion. He indicated that God was slowly at work in his heart. He described God changing his attitude to the church and slowly giving him a growing love for the church. Delbert experienced personal spiritual renewal as he navigated congregational change. He recovered something of his Pentecostal experiential roots. He testified to a rekindled hunger for the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and a fresh passion for the lost. He also related a deepening awareness of God’s affection for him.

About a year and a half ago when the joy of the Lord came upon me again and God said, “Delbert, I love you for who you are. I don’t care what you do. I love just who you are.” Falling in love with a Creator God and with Jesus, not for what He can do but for who He is for me, changed me.

Scott Weatherford, who is a veteran leader with church planting, church turnarounds and network leadership in his resume experienced a dose of humility. He describes his discovery, “I found out I wasn’t as good and smart as I thought I was.”

Robert Gray recounted a significant area of dramatic personal change in his own spiritual life, his identity and his marriage. At his interview, he was two years into the intentional church transformation journey. He recounted that historically, he and his family didn't read Scripture together and he and his wife rarely prayed together. He commented, "We certainly didn't use language like," Let's seek God on this and see what he has to say." He reported that the language and dynamics in his home have changed, with him having more spiritual conversations with his wife in the past two years than in the previous eleven years of their marriage. This fueled a passion to help make disciples and to be a family on mission. Significantly, God did a work regarding Roberts's identity. "My role or my position in the church no longer defines what God is calling me to do, but I think everything before all that hinged on it."

Rob Dyck landed on the primacy of loving Jesus. His big learning and heart change came from the deepening realization that his role is not firstly about leading the church and leading people. It is about loving Jesus deeply and loving people.

John Neufeld discovered confirmation in his calling and a re-ordering of his capacity. The latter was brought about by a thyroid surgery which resulted in him becoming less self-reliant and more dependent on other leaders.

Tenth Avenue Alliance is now an entirely different enterprise than the broken ethnocentric middle class enclave, which held the marginalized at arm's length, as it was when Ken Shigematsu arrived. The biggest lesson that Ken has learned as a leader is what he described as the most important thing for him. This is to become a person who is slowly becoming more like Jesus in his character. Ken also stressed the personal learning

that he must lead from the inside out. He confessed a constant need of ongoing character transformation.

Phil Collins spoke of prioritizing his own spiritual and mental health as big lessons drilled into his heart during the change process. Further to that he stated, "I think the Lord really led me into the revelation that it's His church and that I don't own it and the success of the church isn't dependent upon my power and charisma."

Cost, Pain, and Brokenness

The change leaders demonstrated that there is both a personal cost and personal pain for the leader in the change journey.⁵⁹ Leaders recounted the pain of loneliness, the burden of long hours, the emotional toll and physical fatigue of whitewater rafting the church change currents. Phil Collins, in the face of reduced finances had to let staff go. His context brought a unique stress related to staffing redundancies. "When you let people go they don't disappear into a city of 5,000,000, they disappear into a small provincial town and they are still present, just attending other churches."

Phil Collins recounted the pain of the renaissance leader further when:

I think being misinterpreted, misunderstood. I think it's the cost of the call. You have to yield to the call and allow it be what Christ is calling you to do. I think if you keep spiritually healthy and if you keep exercising and if you keep seeking good advice and you keep talking it limits the cost. It hasn't broken us by any means, but it's just been a heavy burden, which you have to be healthy to cope with it.

⁵⁹ It is important to note that several of the leaders have significant season of brokenness in their back story. They experienced pain and brokenness in a deep way before assuming the role under scrutiny in this research project. These defining season include leadership and marital betrayals, financial losses, bankruptcy, and the pain of leaving family thousands of miles away.

Chris Stevens described the pain of becoming aware of idols in his heart – his family and his church in Ottawa. He recounted this as very painful and significant issue that God brought to him for repentance.

Rob Dyck recounted that change agency cost him relationships and cost him lost sleep. It might be expected that God will use pain to shape and form his leaders for his purposes.

Scott Weatherford reflected on the personal pain he experienced on the change journey and remarked,” Tozer said, “God never uses a man greatly until He hurts him deeply”, and I think that quote sucks but it’s also true.” Weatherford’s health scare brought home lessons about his vitality and mortality. He recounts dark nights of the soul and wrestling with worry and anxiety in prayer. During the change journey the Weatherford family experienced a crisis when their son was deported from Canada, which resulted in the pain of separation. Not only did Pastor Scott deal with health and family challenges, he had an inner battle, when he made a big self-discovery. He became aware of a huge internal pressure to prove himself. He recounts trying to prove to people how smart, gifted, called and holy he was, which he said, led to a real cycle of insecurity that he had to address. In recounting these multiple internal and external and environmental challenges Scott summarized these difficulties,” I would say it’s part of the whole journey of brokenness.”

The most jarring story of pain in the midst of change agency came from Paul Johnson. He moved from Arizona to British Columbia to take the helm of a broken congregation that had terminated the senior pastor in October 2005. A turbulent two years preceded Johnson’s appointment in November 2007. He had to deal with the pressure of

disappointing people and the turnover that resulted from that. He mentioned an exodus that occurred about two years into his role, from him not being a world class Bible teacher who would fill the 1500-seater auditorium with dazzling exposition. Johnson was self-aware enough to recognize the illegitimacy of those expectations but did express that he personalized some of the pain of people leaving.

Johnson presided over the launch of a church plant which in a few short years overshadowed the mother church, as it became a megachurch and the largest congregation in its denomination in Canada. Johnson believes in the stewardship principle in church planting. Give people and resources away and God will give you people and resources back. However, he found it hurtful when people he had built relationships with and poured into left to join the plant. Some left because the mother church was not growing, without even saying goodbye. John cited the loss of friends and leaders as a “high personal cost”, particularly those who were not designated as part of the launch team, but migrated to the new work over time. Johnson also noted the financial cost of moving from Arizona to the Greater Vancouver area. Despite receiving what he believed was fair remuneration, the Johnsons went backwards financially because they could not afford to live in the area.

All of these pains pale into insignificance compared to the harrowing loss of his 21-year-old son, Taylor, during his pastorate. Paul and his wife Wendi’s world was rocked when his son was murdered in February 2013 while house sitting in a vacant home that housed a marijuana growing operation. This was a devastating blow to the Johnsons, and Paul referenced spiritual warfare as part of this wounding season.

I think the spiritual warfare battles that Wendi and I have fought since we moved here have been a huge personal cost. I can’t prove this because I’m not in the

spiritual realm, but I think the murder of my son may very well be tied in to satanic activity to try to discourage us (meshed in there with God's perfect sovereign plan somehow). I don't think you can be a change agent (even saying that I'm a change agent sounds arrogant to me) ...I don't think that you can be a person that desires change or desires to reach the world around you for Christ without paying for it somehow.

Johnson indicates that beyond and in the midst of human drama and tragedy God somehow is mysteriously at work. God is orchestrating His plan and purpose. At the same time, Satan is at work to thwart the servant of God and the work of God. In this intertwined mix of a clash of kingdoms Johnson conveyed the idea that organizational change, congregational change and exercising redemptive influence all come at a personal cost. Here, Johnson and his wife became followers of Robert Quinn by "walking naked into the land of uncertainty." And by their resolve to make the fundamental choices not to harbor bitterness and resentment but to forgive their son's murderer.⁶⁰ The effective, transformational leader makes *fundamental choices*. "Fundamental choices are not subject to changes in internal or external circumstances."⁶¹ The leader must be proactive- not reactive – the leaders must be adaptive and supple – but also anchored. He describes one leader as," externally open, purpose-centered, other-focused, and internally directed."⁶²

⁶⁰ Matthew Claxton, "Family talks of forgiveness as man charged for murder of Tsawwassen man," The Delta Optimist, October 9, 2013, accessed May 15, 2016 <http://www.delta-optimist.com/news/family-talks-of-forgiveness-as-man-charged-in-murder-of-tsawwassen-man-1.653504>. Also see Paul Johnson, "Parents of murdered man forgive, and pray for restoration of his killer," Church For Vancouver, November 27, 2014, accessed May 15, 2016 <http://churchforvancouver.ca/parents-of-murdered-man-forgive-and-pray-for-restoration-of-his-killer/>.

⁶¹ Robert Quinn, *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 117.

⁶² Ibid., 124.

Markers of Missional Engagement

The congregational leaders evaluated responded in a variety of ways regarding how the level of missional engagement shifted under their leadership. They all reported attitudinal and directional shifts. How these changes were expressed in behaviors and in concrete ministry varied considerably.⁶³

A New Attitude and Perspective

Rob Dyck gives voice to a new mindset at Arnold Community Church and his comments suggest the expression and implementation of this is an ongoing adaptive process:

We are to be a church on mission, and not our mission but God's mission, whatever that might look like practically. ... (we've experienced) a re-shifting or a repositioning to that we are here for God's purpose and glory not ours or anything that we can manufacture. I think that's been a big piece that we have and are continually adopting.

Scott Weatherford in cosmopolitan Calgary saw the church more than double in size from 2200 to 4500 in his five years of leadership. In his final year at First Alliance Church some 325 people were baptized subsequent to their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus. Weatherford reported increased numbers of people coming to faith in Christ and greater participation in short term mission trips. Weatherford identified STM trips as

⁶³ One might expect significant variances here, since the churches examined are gathered and scattered in different contexts. It should be noted that they also vary organizationally from huge multi-staff mega church to smaller congregations. First Alliance Church Calgary is now a church of 5,000; Eastview MB Church has 1600 people claim it as their home church, whereas Legacy Church of the Nazarene is a church of 180 and Arnold Community Church is around 400 in attendance. These classic metrics do not reveal missional potency or necessarily kingdom significance – they reveal the fact that some of these churches vary in terms of organizational species. Carl F. George illustrates the idea that a large church is not a bigger version of a small church by offering an ecclesial typology of mouse churches (house group sized), cat, horse, elephant etc. The variety of responses are also due to differences in the length of pastoral tenure E.G. Ken Shigematsu is approaching the 20-year mark as senior pastor of Tenth Avenue Alliance, Robert Gray has served for six years Rob Dyck is approaching 14 years since he assumed leadership of a deeply troubled congregation. Creating a new organizational culture requires urgency as Kotter asserts, but also takes time!

being part of a strategy to equip and develop missional leadership. During his first year there were two such trips. During his fifth and final year there were 13 such trips. Task forces were created to address issues such as human trafficking and water purification. Scott reported that people were “not just giving and praying but actually going and doing.”

Matthew Price cited the addition of a third worship service and increased engagement in corporate prayer with a monthly night of prayer attended by 200 people as corporate changes. In addition, Matthew brought a former pastor on staff to church plant. This new campus will be launched in September 2016. Here NLCC signals numerical growth, increased corporate prayer and multiplication as markers of their new direction.

Phillip Vallelly reported a widespread attitudinal shift, which is still in process, at Winkler MB Church:

We are seeing people embrace the idea that living life on mission is something that is not just reserved for the ministry paid staff. We are beginning to hear stories of people who are having those conversations at work or who are taking the opportunities to say, “May I pray for you?” and they say, “Sure.” That’s been really positive.

Winkler MB supports global missions but has also exercised a redemptive holistic influence through a community center it launched in 2012. This came as a result of Vallelly leading the way in exegeting the needs of the town and building relationships with community leaders.

Terry Dueck, the long serving associate pastor at Winkler MB claims, “Our church has a good understanding of moving in the direction of coming alongside what

God is doing, standing with the broken and the hurting. It's the idea of incarnational living.”⁶⁴

Phillip Vallelly and Winkler MB exhibited two leadership approaches on the journey to missional engagement worth noting. Firstly, leadership that empowered broad based action. Kotter asserts this as a vital step in a change journey. This gave people such as parishioner Chad Berg, a licensed mechanic, “permission” to launch a vehicle repair ministry. This outreach puts reliable cars into the hands of needy families. This ministry was not designed or launched by paid pastoral staff. The leadership did not exercise programmatic control, but welcomed this innovation in a posture of applauding grassroots go-and-share and go-and-do expressions of God’s love.

The Central Station Community Centre is tangible evidence of Winkler MB’s desire to bless and serve their community. This hub meets a variety of needs out of a desire to see the community flourish. The approach that birthed this is worth noting. It came as a result of Vallelly leading the way in discerning where God was at work in the community and where the church’s gifts and assets could serve community needs and deficits. Vallelly modelled civic engagement through serving as President of the Winkler Community Foundation. This organization takes a keen interest in, and funds initiatives that address: education, health and wellness, safety, poverty, community involvement, arts, culture and recreation. Vallelly’s investment and leadership represent a kingdom concern far bigger than the organizational restructuring and spiritual renewal of Winkler MB Church. Vallelly’s actions show an understanding of *missio Dei*, demonstrate an outward focus, and embody a commitment to *place*. Phillip Vallelly served a

⁶⁴ Karen Stiller and Willard Metzger, *Going Missional* (Winnipeg: Word Alive Press, 2010), 45.

congregation in a small but growing town in a rural municipality.⁶⁵ His parish is dwarfed in size compared to other ministry locations surveyed such as Winnipeg, Surrey or Vancouver. However, the missional disciplines of civic participation and calling the church outward by identifying and serving needs point the way forward for faithful missional leadership and fruitful missional engagement.

Colin Van der Kuur, in Castlegar, overheard a coffee shop conversation. One patron was telling another, “that church is a force in our community.” Colin thought, “Wow! Thank you Lord!” Colin and his leadership team acquired a new facility during the church transformation process. They deployed it as a missional asset and it became a community hub with a variety of programs serving community needs. At the same time, Calvary Baptist became a welcoming place for people to come and see. The church became both welcoming and engaged in the life and needs of its community.

Tenth Avenue Alliance has come a long way since Ken Shigematsu became senior pastor.⁶⁶ Ken reported inheriting both a faithful core who wanted to experience “missional church” and also demoralized people frustrated that the congregation was stuck. Ken had to deal with racism and classism in his mono-cultural church.⁶⁷ Back then, Ken was the only full-time pastor. Tenth Church has become a large church with over 2,000 in attendance, across three campuses. It has become one of Canada’s largest and most culturally diverse city center congregations. Tenth Church has also become a large

⁶⁵ The latest census indicates that Winkler has a population of 10,000. It is situated in the vast farmlands of Southern Manitoba in the rural municipality of Stanley.

⁶⁶ See Julia Cheung, “Tenth Church: Open and Vulnerable,” *The Regent World*, November 27, 2014, accessed May 20, 2016, <http://world.regent-college.edu/profile/tenth-church-open-and-vulnerable> for a summary of Ken’s leadership and Tenth’s missional journey.

⁶⁷ “On one of my first Sundays here, I introduced myself to a church member as the new pastor,” Ken tells a group of thirty newcomers. “And she said to me, ‘I know who you are. Why did we have to hire someone who was our enemy during the war?’”

organization with 40 staff including pastors, ministry directors, administrative and support staff, with policies and structures that reflect that.

However, Ken identified the biggest congregational change as becoming much more outward focused. He also identified that Tenth is an accessible and invitational congregation for believers to reach out and invite their friends and colleagues to. Previously “come and see” evangelism was something Tenth aspired to. Now, it is something Tenth actually values and does.

Tenth’s missional engagement is expressed not only in accessible community and invitational evangelism but in a commitment to justice for the poor and ministry to the homeless. Tenth has become involved in advocacy on behalf of women and children vulnerable to sex trafficking both locally in Vancouver and globally. Tenth has also been involved in framing legislation around the issue of human trafficking.

In Winnipeg, John Neufeld indicated that the strongest point of missional renewal in TMP is a high commitment to social involvement in the city. He also noted a shift from the strongly Willow Creek influenced attractional evangelism to personal relational investment and expressions of Christian compassion. He registered an upswing in global missions and a greater equipping and deployment in evangelism as further evidences of missional vitality.

Willow Park Church, under Phil Collins’ leadership has experienced a fresh missional impulse. WP launched “Marketplace Leaders”, where business leaders are equipped to witness and pray for their businesses. Willow Park runs special give-away events, art projects and community events. Phil noted an increasing ease for people to talk about seeing God at work on their street and in their work. These fresh expressions

have flowed out of the emphasis on a spiritually vital relationship with Christ, prayer and hearing God. At the same time, the church is experiencing a steady stream of first time commitments to Christ. Some of the participants on the Hearing God, and Encounter with God seminars have experienced saving encounter with Jesus. Phil indicated that during the weekend worship gatherings he and his team “preach for new life” and “transformation.” This is bearing fruit.

Those who come to faith in Jesus or renewed devotion to Jesus are brought into a people development process, which as Phil recounted during his interview is a pathway in progress:

We encourage people to go through our Hearing God seminars, which are about a listening life, about obedience. We encourage people then to do Encounter Life, about a healed life. We encourage people then to join a small group and a care group. So our discipleship process in terms of programs is Preach for Change, Enter Alpha, Hearing God, Encounter God and then Equip. Equip is equipping you to become deeper in your gifts in serving in the Body, as well as our small group networks. We’ve got one piece to add in, which is Empower, which is gifts and spiritual gifts releasing.

Granville Chapel, whose leadership embraced the intriguing and audacious idea of planting ten churches in ten years has taken steps in this direction. As of Spring 2016, Granville has planted two Chinese congregations, sent out their youth pastor couple who are planting in Fresno, California and are in discussions about planting in Peru. In summer 2016, there are preliminary conversations about planting in nearby Surrey, BC in an urban area of multiple deprivations.

South Delta Baptist Church also stepped into church planting, a bold step that Paul Johnson is convinced moved them away from being an inward focused congregation. SDBC planted a megachurch and doubled in size during Johnson’s 8 ½ years as lead pastor. He claims that the vibe or congregational ethos has changed.

Jon Thomson has witnessed vastly higher spiritual vitality and rejoices in people being more generous, people being reconciled and congregants using their spiritual gifts. He identified greater social involvement globally. Thomson sees C4 Church as now mission focused, with a Glocal focus⁶⁸ on the vulnerable, unreached and displaced.

All of the change leaders bore witness to a new congregational ethos and increased missional engagement with a couple of important variants.⁶⁹

The Fruit of Missional Engagement

Jesus declares that he has chosen and called his disciples to go and bear fruit.⁷⁰ This raises the question what is the fruit that is generated by going? Here the fruit of finding faith and life transformation are offered as missional indicators.

John Neufeld demonstrated a leadership awareness of the need to celebrate wins and to communicate, communicate, communicate by “telling stories all the time.” These 100 word stories are told every single Sunday. These are stories that reveal the weight Neufeld puts on transformation and celebrating where God is at work. These are not stories of historic transformation, but are described by Neufeld, as “The Present Transformation I’m Experiencing.”

The evangelism temperature has increased under Neufeld⁷¹. When he landed “there was a rhetoric of evangelism but no evidence of people coming to faith.” Pre-

⁶⁸ *Glocal* is global *and* local

⁶⁹ Robert Gray reported that it was too early to tell if a new missional culture had been established. There were no people coming to faith that he could report, no demonstrable community service His church had begun to orient itself around discipleship huddles and missional communities. David Smith claimed that the missional temperature had moved from 0-100 but while global mission has been promoted resourced and celebrated; local missional engagement and evangelism seemed to be negligible.

These two cases will be reflected on further in Chapter Six.

⁷⁰ John 15:16.

Christians are part of the gathering and have come to faith through the vehicle of the weekend services⁷². However, Neufeld contends relationships are the redemptive driver in people coming to faith. He also noted that one of TMP's distinctive is that people have a Jesus story and tell their Jesus story. He also indicated that steps were being taken to bolster faith sharing and equip people in evangelism.

C4 Church, North Langley Community Church and Granville Chapel all Alpha as an evangelism engine and tout the power of relational evangelism. These congregations are seeing people come to faith. Matthew Price reported young and old alike coming to faith and was enthusiastic about how active the Sojourners⁷³ are in sharing their faith. Andy Perrett remarked that he had seen more people come to faith in Jesus in his 10 years at Granville Chapel than the previous 15 years he spent in an organization which "claimed it was doing mission and evangelism all the time." Paul Johnson recounted that while people come to faith at SDBC's Sunday services the main ways people come to faith are through the community outreach efforts.⁷⁴

Chris Stevens worked with his board and staff on the new direction and articulated a vision of being "a people transformed by Jesus Christ, with faith to change the world." The WMB leadership focused on a simple clear mission "making more and better disciples."⁷⁵ They also set a goal of 50 baptisms in the next 5 years. This was

⁷¹ As is noted in Chapter 6 is an Evangelist-Shepherd on APEST (31-29); this will be a factor in the congregational ethos through his heart, relationships, priorities and preaching. Neufeld self-identified as a shepherd in his interview BUT as an E-S he is a relational evangelist.

⁷² TMP offers two identical city centre Sunday gatherings – which are very different because they attract a different demographic. The early service is populated by cerebral types and the second is a place for the broken (mentally ill, divorced, addicted, and those in recovery) to gather. Obviously these will overlap. When I preached there in October 2014, about 25 people made first time commitments to Jesus at each service, one of whom I personally led to the Lord.

⁷³ The Sojourners is the NLCC seniors' ministry.

⁷⁴ These are Celebrate Recovery, a Community Dinner and a ministry on a nearby First Nations reserve.

⁷⁵ Waterloo MB Church Ten Year Disciple Resource Guide, 6.

exceeded in the first year with 51 believers baptized! As reported earlier, several staff had the joy of baptizing people they had led to Christ. Chris Stevens has led the way in evangelism and has challenged and equipped his staff to create a culture of response.

Baptism *may be an indicator of missional engagement and transformation.*^{C4} Church reported 98 baptisms in 2015. Baptism signals an identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, a dismissal of the old life and the celebration a new life.⁷⁶ However, baptism may pose a reporting problem.⁷⁷

Robert Gray's response, when asked "How are people finding faith today?" Is of concern. Robert succinctly answered, "they're not." He expressed hope that the future would hold a great harvest and indicated he was praying that this would happen. He further explained that Legacy Church is in "the preparation stage." The implications of this will be explored further.

The Disciple Making Challenge

The Literature survey in Chapter 2 noted that both Hirsch and Breen call for the Church to rediscover disciple making as her central task, this involves equipping people to live out a whole life concrete attachment to Jesus. Mike Breen contends that the missional movement will fail if priority and precedence is not given to making disciples. Breen claims the missional movement is doomed because leaders and practitioners do not

⁷⁶ Romans 6:1-4.

⁷⁷ For believer's baptism to be used as a transformation metric, access to the stories of those baptized would be needed. Is this a dry evangelical who transferred churches and is getting dunked in the new venue? Is this a darkness to light story? Is this an adolescent who came to faith as a child? Is this an adolescent rite of passage? Scenario four is an issue in MB and Anabaptist churches where there is an expectation that a teenager will be baptized, with the family cheering them on. The spiritually incestuous nature of scenario four is seen where the candidate has a family member preside as the sponsor. The sponsor may read a letter, relate the candidate's journey and perhaps exhort them from Scripture. This scenario undermines the Christocentric nature of baptism.

attend to the core activity of making disciples, who make disciples, and therefore is analogous to a car without an engine. Breen presses for making missionaries out of disciples and making disciples who make disciples. Breen contends for intentional disciple making taking precedence over missional engagement.

“If your church community is not yet competent at making disciples who can make disciples, please don’t send your members out on mission until you have a growing sense of confidence in your ability to train, equip and disciple them.”⁷⁸

This raises a big question. How did the renaissance leaders under review and their congregations foster and facilitate intentional disciple making? If missional engagement is fuelled by disciple making what kinds of processes were in place to make disciples?

The approach to discipleship varied significantly. Some leaders seemed to assume that placing someone in a community group would address disciple making. C4 Church places each new convert in a one-on-one mentoring relationship to ensure an initial foundation for growth is in place. C4 has over 70 connect groups which feature prayer, sharing, food, conversation, Bible study or video teaching. C4 also offers classes under seek, discover, grow, guide and freedom⁷⁹. Granville Chapel has a variety of community groups gathered around causes, affinity and geography and also has DNA groups. The DNA groups are triads that focus on reading and obeying Scripture, confessing sin and evangelistic praying. C4 also offers this intimate discipleship framework as C3 Connect.

⁷⁸ Mike Breen, “Why The Missional Movement Will Fail”, The Verge Network Blog, Sept 14, 2011 accessed February 1, 2016 <http://www.vergenetwork.org/2011/09/14/mike-breen-why-the-missional-movement-will-fail/>.

⁷⁹ The Seek groups are for those who have questions about God, faith, and life. Discover is focused on those who believe in Jesus and desire to know him better and offers a basics stream and a foundations class. Guide is targeted for Christ centered followers as shown in the description:” You are mature in your faith. You are using your gifts to serve others, and your greatest joy is to see others join you on the Pursuit. Your invitation from Jesus is to make more disciples. Take a GUIDE class if you are at this stage.” Freedom is for those who desire spiritual, emotional, and relational freedom in Christ. Three classes are offered here: Bondage Breaker, Breakthrough, and Sexual Purity.

John Neufeld's verdict on TMP's short term mission teams were that they were "overseas discipleship opportunities."

The need for people development and disciple making would be have unanimous support from each leader interviewed. The delivery and effectiveness of disciple making varied significantly. Some churches like C4 Church and Willow Park had developed discipleship strategies around different phases and issues in the life of a believer. SDBC was using community groups as a discipleship vehicle, but Paul Johnson had his eye on a multi-staged approach like Saddleback's baseball diamond.⁸⁰ TMP was wrestling with formation pathways and Legacy Church had begun to implement a 3 DM process. This is a significant issue which will be reflected on further in the next and final chapter with its focus on practical theology.

Summary

While there has been discussion of leadership gifting and style that may leverage missional renewal, Chapter Five discussed the dynamics and disciplines of the pastors interviewed. A review of the material covered above is in order before advancing to the practical applications for effective congregational ministry.

God was conspicuous by his absence in some of the pastoral reports regarding the leader taking on his congregational assignment. Others spoke eloquently and expansively, some with depth of feeling, that God had directed them. In reviewing the fifteen change journeys Kotter was upheld as a normative change framework. However, the diligence

⁸⁰ Rick Warren of Saddleback Community Church, the exponent of Purpose Driven Church, promotes the idea of 100,200,300, and 400 level classes targeted at different levels of spiritual maturity. These 4 levels are depicted by the bases on a baseball diamond. The challenge with the Saddleback baseball diamond is that it was designed to press people into deeper levels of congregational engagement, not to cultivate deepening missional engagement.

with which the eight step process was followed was uneven. The need to distinguish between a false urgency and a pressing desire for congregational change surfaced. While all seemed to understand the need to create a cohesive dream team or a guiding coalition to support necessary congregational change, implementation was uneven.

Overwhelmingly, the pulpit was used as a strategic medium to declare the gospel and bring God's Word to bear on the life of the congregation and to call for change.

Developing a vision and strategy was grasped by many, but not all of the leaders as a vital step. Some leaders expressed highly collaborative posture here, while others were more directive or prescriptive. Ongoing communication was unearthed as a critical ongoing discipline through breakfasts, lunches, town hall meetings, websites, and printed resources. The leaders all dealt with opposition and exoduses as part of the change journey. Three of the leaders identified supernatural spiritual opposition against them, their families or the church.

The leaders all reported on personal support strategies. Some had mentors and external voices. The need to appropriate the Word of God personally and be sustained by God's truth emerged as a significant dynamic. The need for practices and rhythms that nourish and feed the soul of the leader was a common thread that will be expanded upon for its pragmatic implications in Chapter Six.

A discussion on areas of personal transformation that the pastors experienced was followed by identifying the need for kingdom metrics. Leaders reported on areas of personal growth, transformation, repentance and learning. The second issues, metrics, unearthed the need for the leaders to be able to assess corporate transformation specifically regarding missional engagement.

CHAPTER SIX
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
How does a renaissance leader accomplish missional renewal?

Introduction

This research project identified and explored a significant need, the kind of pastoral leadership that proves effective in sparking fresh missional imagination and engagement in an established congregation. Congregations are subject to the dynamics of the organizational life cycle: birth, infancy, maturity, decline, and death. This project examined the leadership type and leadership practices that effectively address congregational stagnation or decline.

The Literature Survey presented Kotter's eight stage pathway as a normative framework for deep congregational change. The Biblical and theological review supported Quinn's deep change paradigm that a congregational change agent must himself experience renewal and transformation. The review also explored the missionary nature of God and that the call to follow Jesus is an invitation not only to relationship and transformation, but an invitation to join him in his redemptive work in the world. Authentic spiritual renewal will therefore rekindle or ignite the missional impulse. Fruitful missional engagement must be fuelled by vibrant spirituality and dependency. Jesus was presented as the paradigmatic missional leader and the missional implications of the five leadership gifts he has given his church were explored.

Chapter Four recounted the research journey and methodology. Chapter Five presented the rich qualitative data drawn from interactions with Canadian congregational leaders who attempted to move their congregations into renewed spiritual and missional vigour.

Richard Osmer identifies four tasks in practical theology that require four questions to be answered. The empirical task (what is going on?), the interpretative task (what is really going on?), the normative task (what ought to be going on?), and, finally, the pragmatic task (how might we respond?)¹ This chapter attends to the pragmatic task.

The qualitative data was primarily gathered through interviews with fifteen Canadian pastors. This elicited the key themes that identified and reported on in Chapter Five and are expanded on here to offer pragmatic implications for effective congregational change leadership. Additional data was gathered through leadership evaluations.² The exploration of leadership dimensions and dynamics for renaissance leadership will firstly examine the person and then the practices of effective renaissance leadership.

The Renaissance Leader is Apostolic

Both the Literature Research and the Biblical and theological survey demonstrated that the renaissance leader should be optimally *apostolic*. The generative gifts of apostle, prophet, and evangelist can all spark a fresh outward focus but the apostolic gift has unique capacities to release missional imagination and engagement in the life of a congregation. The apostolic gift is particularly required where the gospel has been neglected and the church has succumbed to missional stagnation.

The APEST test revealed that 60% of the pastors have apostle as their foundational leadership gift. When this is expanded to secondary gifting, 80% of the leaders have a leadership capacity that exhibits apostolic bias. This supports the

¹ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 14.

² All of the research subjects did an APEST self-evaluation to identify how the fivefold gifts in Ephesians 4 is expressed through their leadership.

assumption that the leaders surveyed would be skewed towards an apostolic leadership style. This supports the pragmatic ministry implication that apostolic leaders are drawn to and gifted for missional turnaround scenarios and should be deployed accordingly. Two³ of the leaders enjoyed the benefits of preparatory intentional congregational change prior to their installation. This gave the two pastors a change journey advantage, since they did not have to spend their own relational equity in effecting necessary organizational change.

The research⁴ supports apostolic leadership being deployed to spark fresh missional imagination and engagement in a tired or troubled church. The generative gifts of apostle, prophet and evangelist need to be honored and affirmed and deployed for the sake of Jesus' mission. There are no silver bullets for church renewal and missional renaissance. However, the Biblical record and church history (ancient and contemporary) bear witness to the unique power of apostolic gifting to recalibrate congregations into new dimensions of spiritual vitality, gospel faithfulness, and kingdom advancement. The apostle is uniquely anointed by the Spirit for the foundational task of gospel recalibration outlined below. This needs to be taken into account in the discernment of leaders for replants and church transformation projects, especially in light of how perilous these ministries are.

³ Two of the leaders enjoyed the benefits of preparatory intentional congregational change prior to their installation. Andy Perrett (Evangelist-Teacher) and Chris Stevens (Apostle-Evangelist) stepped into roles where transitional work had been done. This may have significantly compensated for Perrett's lack of apostolic bias and helped set up Stevens' apostolic leadership for some of the rapid changes he introduced. It should also be noted that Matthew Price (Shepherd-Teacher) inherited a stable congregation where he enjoyed the conferred trust currency of his predecessor and the support and coaching of a highly apostolic elder who heads up a church planting network.

⁴ The individual APEST diagnostics are in the appendices and reveal that 80% of the research subjects display apostolic bias. This is where the leader has apostle is either the primary or secondary leadership gift.

Apostolic gifting not supported by relational posture, vital spirituality, discernment, and organizational savvy will not be effective. However, the appointment of the right kind of leader for the task at hand is critical. The leader needed, under God, to release missional impulse is apostolic.

The Renaissance Leader is Called

Church transformation journeys are perilous. The pastor taking leadership of a stagnant or broken congregation steps into a potential minefield. He faces the issues of walking into the line of fire, navigating change with the possibility of losing his job, while aspiring to a lengthy pastoral tenure to effect culture shift. This suggests a certain kind of leader is required to guide a congregation through the challenges and turbulence of missional renewal. That leader is a *called out leader*. “One does not choose ministry! A pastor is chosen. He is chosen by God for God’s purposes, in God’s time and place, and serves him in God’s ways.”⁵

The leader must live out of the dynamic of being firstly called to Jesus and called by Jesus. A leader who embraces the challenges and demands of leading a church into spiritual revitalization and missional engagement must do so knowing they are on Jesus’ assignment.

Both Matthew Price and Delbert Enns accepted the invitation to consider the senior pastorate only after praying through the opportunity. The duo’s praying suggests seeking God for discernment and guidance.

⁵ Henry T. Blackaby and Henry Brandt, *The Power of the Call* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1997), 21.

“They called and asked,” was one pastor’s explanation of taking his post.⁶ He further described this as “the embracing of an opportunity that aligned with my gift mix and passion.” This suggests discernment involves taking a role that gives expression to God’s design of the leader. Neufeld identified that he was a fit.⁷ He knew that he could either be a church planter or a turnaround pastor. When a church planting opportunity vaporized, he took the TMP opportunity.⁸

While four leaders did not mention prayer, seeking God or responding to a divine summons.⁹ Eight of the interviewees communicated clearly that God had called them to their assignment. “The call is that moment when Christians find out why God put them on this planet. To go through life without ever experiencing and responding to this call is to die without ever having lived.”¹⁰

In initially answering why he came to Granville Chapel, Andy Perrett cited five factors.¹¹ Later in the interview he clearly voiced the idea that Granville Chapel was God’s appointment for him and that God had Andy in the place He wanted him to be. Phil Collins views his pastoral leadership at Willow Park as a result of “obedience to the

⁶ John Neufeld, *The Meeting Place*, Winnipeg.

⁷ Part of the stewardship of a leader’s life is indeed to honor the gifts and passions God has placed within them. Part of due diligence is identifying how one will fit in a role. Will the leader’s S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual gifts, Heart (i.e. passions), Abilities (talents) Personality, Experiences) be a good fit? However, Neufeld does not describe praying about this or having a “this is the way walk ye in it” from God.

⁸ Neufeld said yes, knowing TMP was a mess. If the Matthew Price appointment was described in only two words, it would be unsettled and prayer. Neufeld’s two words are wrestling and stewardship. Neufeld was in a wrestle because he is wired for both church planting and church restoring. A mentor, church planting guru, Bob Logan, told him he had to choose one or the other. A third word for Neufeld might be Providence, his plans to church plant came to nought. He was approached to take the helm of a church in chaos. He said, “yes.”

⁹ Phillip Vallelly, Scott Weatherford, Colin Van der Kuur, and Paul Johnson

¹⁰ Bill Easum, *Put On Your Own Oxygen Mask First* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 43.

¹¹ Perrett identified dissonance and conflict in a missionary organization he had served in for 15 years; tension in the Anglican Church he and his family were part of; resonance with the refreshed Granville vision, new values, and direction that emerged from work done during a pastoral vacancy; during the pastoral vacancy people nudging him to consider the role; and fifthly; him being at a loose end and applying for the position.

Holy Spirit.” Both Rob Dyck and Robert Gray expressed clear call language. Dyck did not bail in the turbulent early days at his church because of a sense of call.¹²

Three of the pastors painted vivid pictures of God’s leading. Ken Shigematsu heard from God during a week of prayer and fasting. This gave him a divine impetus to apply for the role he has occupied for almost twenty years. Stevens and Thomson offered the most expansive call narratives. These two leaders gave rich accounts of God’s disruptive dealings and God speaking with great clarity. Jon speaks of unexpected encounters with Christ propelling him into his role. Chris identifies various ways in which he concluded God was dislodging him from familiar and fruitful ministry and relocating him for the sake of the kingdom. This trio have seen tremendous fruit from their ministries. This raises the intriguing question of a possible correlation between a vivid call narrative and kingdom impact.

A prospective renaissance leader must be able to walk into the role knowing it is God’s assignment.¹³ One may be apprehended by God, like Jon Thomson, or may seek God like Ken Shigematsu. The pastors who clearly professed being assigned by God to their respective congregations have all weathered ecclesial storms, faced leadership challenges, seen significant fruit and all have experienced lengthy pastoral tenures.

The Renaissance Leader Practices and Prioritizes Gospel Recalibration

The renaissance leader in an established church that has plateaued, declined, or is in trouble, must use the pulpit to communicate God’s heart to the congregation. Fourteen

¹² Rob Dyck hunkering down, sometimes retreating to his office to weep before the Lord, is more than an expression of pastoral grit or tenacity. Rob stayed put in a congregation that he described as at “rock bottom” because he was called to do so.

¹³ This sense of call can sustain and anchor the renaissance leader during the church transformation roller coaster ride.

of the pastors interviewed used the pulpit as a strategic vehicle to give voice to God's vision. One¹⁴ saw this as a personal growth area but was convinced the preaching ministry, even if it is exegetical, must be used to share vision and set direction. One of the fifteen seemed to under-utilize this vehicle. He mentioned that he "drip fed" vision, introduced some missional vocabulary and once a year, preached his annual report.¹⁵ Even this minimalism demonstrates the pulpit as a powerful communication medium.

The pulpit gives a platform to bring the wisdom, power and truth of Scripture to bear on the life of a congregation. The leader must speak as a herald who has confidence in the power of the gospel.¹⁶ The pastor must not only preach the message of the cross but have confidence that the message of the cross has power to save.¹⁷

The first order of ecclesial business for the renaissance leader may be to call people back to the gospel, to remind them of the centrality of the gospel, and the sufficiency and supremacy of Jesus. "Most religion is not gospel. Most religion is idolatry. Most religion is self-aggrandizement. It is urgently required that pastors distinguish between culture religion and Christian gospel."¹⁸

Delbert Enns lamented¹⁹ a systemic issue where Eastview "had removed the centrality of the gospel." He noted that speaking about the cross was infrequent. He addressed this head on by "changing the language" and by returning to the gospel. Enns points the way for the renaissance leader to remind and reorient the congregation around

¹⁴ Phil Collins, Willow Park Church.

¹⁵ Robert Gray at Legacy Church of the Nazarene.

¹⁶ Romans 1:14-16.

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:18-21.

¹⁸ Eugene H. Peterson, *Under The Unpredictable Plant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 34.

¹⁹ Enns recounted the preaching was a blend of pop psychology, self-improvement and self-reliance. "7 steps, 21 steps ...do this and you will have a great week."

a Christocentric and crucicentric gospel.²⁰ The leader wanting to develop a new missional culture must cultivate a gospel culture.

Congregational renewal involves being freshly captivated by the beauty, power, and truth of the gospel. “Most of our problems in life come from a lack of proper orientation to the gospel. Pathologies in the church and sinful patterns in our individual lives ultimately stem from a failure to think through the deep implications of the gospel and to grasp and believe the gospel through and through. Put positively, the gospel transforms our hearts and our thinking and changes our approaches to absolutely everything.”²¹

Ray Ortlund is an exponent of building gospel culture in the life of the church. He defines this as: “The shared experience of grace for the undeserving: the corporate incarnation of the biblical message in the relationships, vibe, feel, tone, values, priorities, aroma, honesty, freedom, gentleness, humility, cheerfulness-indeed, the total human reality of a church defined and sweetened by the gospel.”²² This is the goal in front of the renaissance leader.

The renaissance leader will not only commit to gospel exposition, but may have to engage in demolition. The leader may have to break up a wrong foundation before laying a gospel foundation. The leader may have to tackle aberrant theological operating systems before installing a gospel operating system.²³

²⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

²¹ Keller Timothy, *Center Church - Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2012), 51.

²² Ray Ortlund, “How to build a gospel culture in your church,” Breakout session presentation at The Gospel Coalition, Orlando, 2015.

²³ 2 Corinthians 10:5.

In Scripture followership, and transforming relationship with Jesus precede missional engagement.²⁴ The first order of business for the leader may simply be calling the congregants to Jesus and transformation.

Delbert Enns was not alone in engaging in gospel recalibration. Other pastors had a deepening conviction about this. “I became even more centralized on the theological truths of sin and its destructive nature and the need for transformation of Jesus Christ, both temporally and eternally.”²⁵ One leader commented on preaching through Galatians with its eye opening call to the gospel. He indicated the need to return again and again to the gospel.²⁶ Chris Stevens struck a corollary note in his lamenting of the inadequacy of liberal theology. He took steps to establish his staff in gospel clarity and fluency.²⁷

The call to mission requires Christological clarity. The renaissance leader must start with Christ, not mission. To fuel missional imagination and engagement the renaissance leader must live, lead and preach with Christological clarity, and point to a Jesus who is both personal and cosmic. The size and scope of the Christology will not only affect missional impulse but the nature and scope of missional engagement as Bakke asserts:

We need a theology of the Philippians sort, which is Christ in us ...Christ in me
...But we also need a theology of Colossians. Colossian Christology is Christ over

²⁴ See for example Jesus summons to the fishermen in Matthew 4:19 where followership precedes fishing for people. In Mark 3:14, Jesus “appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.” A transforming relationship with Jesus precedes mobilization in proclamation Mark 6:7 where the Twelve are firstly called *to Jesus* before they are deployed as kingdom agents. In John 6 Peter’s response to Jesus raising the question if the disciples wished to join the crowds leaving because of their revulsion at his totalizing claims, illustrates that the disciples, as given voice by Simon Peter, had pinned all their hopes on Jesus (John 6:68-69). As Peter exclaims elsewhere, “We have left everything to follow you!” (Mark 10:28). These Scriptures are illustrative that the primitive Jesus movement ordered their lives completely around Jesus. This stands in stark contrast to contemporary easy-believism.

²⁵ Paul Johnson.

²⁶ Phillip Valletly.

²⁷ To his surprise, Stevens had to deal with staff who were offside with historic orthodox evangelical faith. This took him by surprise since he assumed alignment with his church’s confession of faith as a given.

me- Christ who is the firstborn over all creation, the Christ who is the glue that holds the galaxy together. In him all things exist, the superglue of the cosmos. The Christ over us is the powerful Christ who exists in the fullness of the Godhead bodily... *“The powerful public Christ allows us to do ecological justice work, to take on the city schools and sewer systems and healthcare and transit systems and to deal with discrimination by the banks against people of poverty. This Christ of Colossians handles all that. At the same time, don’t give up that personal Jesus of Philippians who lives in us and transforms us personally.”*²⁸

The Renaissance Leader Practices Attentiveness

The daunting task of leading a congregation into deep change requires self-leadership, spiritual vitality, renewal, and a commitment to holistic self-care. Paul Johnson described his change journey as exhausting. One pastor is currently on medical leave. One change leader who presided over structural and staffing changes, huge numerical growth, and loads of conversions had a medical crisis which he attributed to a lack of self-care. Another leader had panic attacks.

These episodes illustrate that the change leader must attend to their own spiritual, emotional and physical wellness. The change leaders all recounted opposition and resistance to change, exoduses on their watch, some leaders reported the undermining of their leadership, subversive staff, passive aggressive resistance, and personal attacks. One leader recounted “a lot of blood was shed, including my own.”²⁹ All of this takes its toll. The spiritual vitality, emotional well-being, physical health, relational health, and state of

²⁸ Raymond Bakke, *A Biblical Word for an Urban World* (Valley Forge: Board of International Ministries, 2000), 24-25.

²⁹ This leader picked up in the blood-letting metaphor in a congregational letter, communicating he was accepting a call to another pastoral position. He drew parallels between him moving and God having a successor for the church with David not being permitted to build the Temple and his son doing so, because the warrior poet had a lot of blood on his hands! Here indicates the trauma and personal cost of the change journey with great clarity.

mind all influence the leader's capacity to lead well.³⁰ This is true during plain sailing. This is also true, especially so, during the destabilizing white water rafting ride of church transformation.

The Renaissance Leader Must be Attentive to His Own Soul

The leader must exercise their ministry out of the reservoir of deep devotion to Jesus. The first call of the leader is simply to *be with Jesus*.³¹ Activism must not short-circuit spending time at the feet of Jesus.³² This means, for example, the renaissance leader will not dig into Scripture first and foremost as a homiletical and vision casting storehouse. The pastor must come to Scripture to encounter God. Scripture engagement must not become merely a means to developing talks but as a means of meeting the Living Word behind the written Word and fueling relationship with Jesus, devotion to him,³³ ongoing transformation³⁴ and sanctification³⁵. "The pastor's responsibility is to keep the community attentive to God."³⁶ The leader himself must therefore live a God attentive life. This must shape the renaissance leader's priorities and rhythms.

³⁰ Scripture records the holistic development of Jesus in Luke 2:52 and the call to love God holistically with heart, soul, mind and strength (see Luke 10:25-37 especially 10:25). Here loving God has affective, intellectual and physical dimensions. Whether one subscribes to a bipartite or tripartite understanding of humanity, the implications are clear for renaissance leaders: holistic self-care and holistic leadership.

³¹ Mark 3:14 notes the sequence of priorities for the apostles. "He appointed twelve *that they might be with him* and that he might send them out to preach."

³² Luke 10:38-42.

³³ John 5:38-40.

³⁴ Romans 12:1-3.

³⁵ Psalm 119:11.

³⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 2.

As noted above the renaissance leader must preach the gospel and speak the Word of God over the church and into people's lives. However, Peterson, contends that preaching Scripture is not the first port of call, immersion in Scripture is.

I can be a pastor who preaches...The pulpit is a great gift and I want to use it well...I have no interest in "delivering sermons" ...I need a drenching in Scripture; I require an immersion in biblical studies. I need reflective hours over the pages of Scripture as well as personal struggles with the meaning of Scripture. That takes more time than it takes to prepare a sermon.³⁷

Here Peterson indicates that the pastoral priority must not be expediting sermons, but lingering over Scripture. Paul's exhortation to "train" in godliness³⁸ takes time. Peterson's pastoral self-disclosure suggests the renaissance leader must create the time and space to marinate in Scripture, not simply to boost preaching prowess, but for their own soul's sake.

The invitation from God, is for his ministers, to serve out of the overflow of communion and union with him. The renaissance leader must adopt sustaining practices³⁹ and rhythms that fuel the soul and stir up affection for Jesus. Jesus calls for dependency on him and the foundational priority of abiding him.

The Renaissance Leader must be Attentive to the Holy Spirit

"If God doesn't move, it doesn't matter. We could lay our plans out, we can do what we can do in the flesh, but if the Spirit's not in it, it doesn't matter. And the Spirit is

³⁷ Ibid., 20.

³⁸ 1 Timothy 4:7.

³⁹ Regular consistent Bible reading and meditation, silence, solitude, prayer, journaling, Sabbath, corporate worship, retreats, fasting are all examples of disciplines that can fan the flames of devotion.

capricious but also the Spirit is predictable. He is a mystery. We cannot understand Him, but we can love Him and be dependent upon Him.”⁴⁰

Delbert Enns rediscovered the empowered life. He described growing up Pentecostal where a “thirst and the hunger for God’s presence “was normative. He drifted from his roots and then, in the midst of the Eastview change story, he called out to God in prayer voicing a desire to walk in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. In the process of church renewal, Delbert Enns experienced a renewed relationship with the Holy Spirit. He longs for his church to experience that too. He described believing “in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,” “praying for the anointing of God’s Spirit”, and inviting people into that.

As Jon Thomson related the change journey at C4 Church, he described the old ethos as being very self-sufficient and commented, “We were not a Spirit-filled church.” One of Jon’s convictions through the change process was “the necessity of revival and the empowerment of the Spirit.” Thomson spoke most expansively about spiritual gifts, relating gift orientation to spiritual empowerment.

Paul Johnson spoke of the increased level of missional engagement at SDBC due to divine inspiration and the work of the Holy Spirit in people’s hearts and minds. Johnson also spoke of human counsel supporting him through the challenges of SDBC, but also depending on the Holy Spirit for wisdom.

Ken Shigematsu recounted the Holy Spirit speaking to him in prayer and Andy Perrett described one of his growth areas at Granville Chapel has been learning to allow God’s Spirit to speak to him clearly. Phil Collins in reviewing his journey as a renaissance leader commented,” I feel I’ve walked in step with the Holy Spirit.”

⁴⁰ Scott Weatherford.

The renaissance leader must prioritize their own ongoing spiritual renewal and a pursuit of the life giving and empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. The renaissance leader needs to heed Jesus' gracious invitation to drink of the Spirit and to experience streams of living water.⁴¹ The renaissance leader needs to be led by the Spirit and in Ken Shigematsu's words, "To be open to the surprising and sometimes unpredictable strategy of the Holy Spirit."

The Renaissance Leader must be Attentive to Holistic Self-Care

Scott Weatherford made course corrections because his health was in jeopardy. He describes this challenge: "I had a TIA (transient ischemic attack) in the winter of 2011 and I had to make changes then because the TIA was directly related to stress, nothing else (and being fat), but that was a huge lynchpin for me. You can only put up with a level of misery for so long, and so that's what caused the change for me...a health crisis."

Scott's health scare was induced by the stress of navigating congregational change. By his own admission, being overweight was a contributing factor. John Thompson recounts, "Congregational change made me face my psychological weaknesses and the necessity of clinical counseling." These leaders took steps to deal with physical and psychological brokenness. This is appropriate remedial self-care.

Ken Shigematsu points the way to proactive self-care, he maintains practices like Sabbath and meditation, and regular physical exercise. Having reviewed his spiritual, relational, physical and recreational rhythms, Ken declared these "fuel our joy and it makes us more creative." He continued, "If you are happy as a leader and as a pastor, you are just going to do better, more creative work. You will more attuned to the Spirit, more

⁴¹ John 7:37-39.

attuned to yourself, more attuned to the people around you, and those are really good things.”

Ken points to the need for the renaissance leader to review their gauges and fuel the emotional, physical and spiritual tanks. The renaissance leader will guard their heart⁴², and not only attend to holiness and doctrinal purity, but take steps to ensure physical and emotional health.⁴³“With more physical energy, you can engage more deeply on a physical level that’s obvious- but you can do so on a greater emotional, mental and spiritual level too. If you do not maximize your physical energy through proper nutrition, exercise and rest, then you simply cannot maximize the other three types of energy.”⁴⁴

Burnout surfaced as a narrative thread amongst the interview subjects. Two of the change leaders described burnout as part of their journey.⁴⁵ If the leader does not live out of their identity as a dearly loved child of the Father, and seeks validation and approval for what they do, this creates a significant problem. MacDonald distinguishes between a *called* and a *driven* person.⁴⁶ A driven person will be predisposed to overextend themselves, and others, and be prone to anger, depression, or burnout. The gospel antidote is to live as a dearly loved fully accepted child of the Father, whose identity is not bound up in performance, position, productivity, work, or success. Burnout not only

⁴² Proverbs 4:23.

⁴³ A case for physical mastery and self-care and regular exercise might be made from Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

⁴⁴ Jim Loehr, *The Power of Story* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 174.

⁴⁵ Delbert Enns, a veteran of organizational turnarounds took a month off due to “burnout.” David Smith had a couple of minor burn out episodes. His elders responded by giving him time off. In a third episode, he hit a physical and emotional wall, in September 2015. He took a paid leave through year-end, and returned to reduced duties in January 2016. He then left his pastoral role in April 2016 with the intent of selling real estate. Robert Gray has been signed off on a medical leave with support of his board from June 2016 to year end 2016.

⁴⁶ Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2003), 29-42.

must be addressed with gospel truth, but by developing a life outside of the demands of ministry. John Neufeld⁴⁷ provides an example of this with his cottage building avocation.

The Renaissance Leader must be Attentive to Spiritual Warfare

One of the issues that emerged from the interviews was two leaders' awareness of a spiritual warfare dynamic, while the other thirteen subjects were silent. Jon Thomson spoke of demonic attacks and supernatural evil. Paul Johnson subscribes to the sovereignty of God, but concluded Satan was active in the heartbreaking murder of his son. The renaissance leader must be awake to the reality of spiritual warfare.

C.S. Lewis indicated that there are two ditches that a renaissance leader may fall into regarding supernatural evil. "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."⁴⁸

Based on their self-reporting, the majority of the pastors interviewed fell into the "materialist" ditch that Lewis describes. Obsessing about demons and enemy attacks will not serve a church turnaround pastor well at all. Neither will a reductionist rationalism that refuses to see that behind the curtains of a church transformation project there are invisible agents at work. Paul Johnson was aware of this while humbly recognizing he

⁴⁷ Neufeld reported that he assumed the leadership of TMP having learned lessons from a previous ministry burnout. Neufeld described the therapeutic power of doing something tangible (building the cottage) compared the intangibles of pastoral work. Neufeld found having to focus singularly when he was operating a chainsaw, was life-giving. He also indicated that in light of the prior burnout episode that he set the boundaries of being out only two evenings in any given week.

⁴⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001), ix.

could not pinpoint or categorize all of his personal nightmare and turbulence as the actions of dark angels. Johnson acknowledged mystery in the convergence of the kind and competent hand of a sovereign God and the destructive work of the thief who is out to steal, kill, and destroy.⁴⁹

“We affirm that spiritual warfare demands spiritual weapons, and that we must both preach the Word in the power of the Spirit, and pray constantly that we may enter into Christ’s victory over the principalities and powers of evil.”⁵⁰

For the renaissance pastor, humility and submission to God⁵¹, an awareness that that the work can be thwarted by unseen forces⁵², a surrendered overcoming life⁵³, and a commitment not to give the enemy any access or a “foothold”⁵⁴ are required in the face of the spiritual battle. Renaissance leaders need to wake up to spiritual warfare and act accordingly. This reality will not be contended with by a self-sufficient leader dependent on their own drive, or ingenuity. This reality calls for prayerful dependency on God.

The Renaissance Leader will Attend to the Power of Prayer

Paul Johnson spoke of “praying desperate prayers.” Ken Shigematsu has built prayer and seeking God into the rhythm of his life and leadership. Phil Collins is a man of prayer⁵⁵ committed to cultivating a culture of prayer and hearing God. Matthew Price has

⁴⁹ John 10:10.

⁵⁰ “The Manila Manifesto”, Eleventh Affirmation, Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization, accessed June 20, 2016 <https://www.lausanne.org/content/manifesto/the-manila-manifesto>.

⁵¹ James 4:7.

⁵² 2 Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 6:11-12.

⁵³ Revelation 12:11.

⁵⁴ Ephesians 4:27.

⁵⁵ Pastor Phil Collins described taking multiple mini-prayer retreats, and spends one to two hours a day in prayer.

increased the prayer temperature at NLCC, has introduced new expressions of corporate prayer, and longs for a church on its knees, characterized by sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Phil Collins described a huge shift in Willow Park, which he attributed to seeking God.

“The church is very strong now. The level of worship and hunger for God has grown massively. The level of seeking His face has grown. The culture has shifted. The outreach...we’ve ran Alphas, we have drop-in centers, we’re praying with people. We’re just reaching lots of people all the time everywhere.”

The Renaissance Leader Walks an Intentional Change Pathway

Change leaders must be adaptive and improvisational because they walk “naked into the land of uncertainty.” However, they still need a directional road map or change framework. The wise renaissance leader will embark on the church transformation project informed by Kotter. Kotter’s eight step change process gives wisdom for the road ahead and helps the leader identify stages and evaluate progress in the enormous task of church transformation. The Literature survey proposed Kotter as a normative change framework, with the interviews confirming Kotter’s practical wisdom. Those who followed the framework flourished, those who neglected or did not pay sufficient attention to a stage, suffered the consequences.⁵⁶ Particular areas of diligence on the change journey are examined below.

⁵⁶ It seems, for example, David Smith did not build a cohesive guiding coalition. This may explain, in large measure, why a new day of missional potency did not dawn.

Discerning True or False Urgency

The leader may have to deal with a “false urgency” that will not support church transformation. An ailing congregation may be reeling from a troubled season such as a pastoral betrayal. The urgency here may be to simply make the pain go away. As the symptoms subside, there is no real urgency to change for the sake of Jesus and his mission. An “urgency” fueled by fear or survival will become inward focused. This kind of urgency is about “going back to the way things were” rather than following Jesus into the mission field. Urgency is critical to create impetus for necessary organizational change and moving beyond status quo thinking and behaviors. If Phillip Vallelly had a mulligan, he would not have summarily announced to his flock that there would be no worship services for a five week stretch. However, this was a powerful and costly signal that the status-quo was unacceptable. Vallelly’s actions were both symbolic and concrete in supporting the desired shifts from member culture to mission culture and church culture to kingdom culture. The leader may have to take disruptive action to infuse urgency into a congregation that nods at the rhetoric of missional change.

Gray and Smith⁵⁷ were in all likelihood dealing with a false congregational urgency. When asked what he did to instill a sense of urgency, Robert responded, “there was a sense of urgency in terms of self-preservation of a group.” This is the *false urgency* noted above. He also indicated he did not want to preside over a congregation where the writing was on the wall.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ At Legacy Church and Crossway Church respectively.

⁵⁸ Here the leader may reveal a motivation of not wanting to be on the bridge of a sinking ship. This is problematic in terms of missional motivation. Further, Robert, makes an assumption that the congregation were all clued in on the trajectory. The church which had reached 300 in its heyday and dropped to about 180 in attendance and was hemorrhaging \$10,000 each month. However, unless this is drawn to everyone’s attention, the implications will not dawn on people because of denial or nostalgia.

Smith did instill urgency “because with the conflict that had occurred we were already in an extremely urgent situation.” Smith also claimed the church was “imploding” and on course for death. This corporate sense of urgency was about survival.⁵⁹

This illustrates that the change leader needs to identify what is fueling any sense of congregational urgency and be able to distinguish between false urgency and missional urgency.

What can a leader do to in the face of false urgency? Pray! It is the Holy Spirit who effects heart change and who moves people from complacency to passion and from status quo self-absorption to sacrificial investment in the kingdom. The leader must also have uncomfortable conversations and help people to “confront the brutal facts” about the current state of affairs, and be prepared for conflict. The leader must not only lead with “fierce conversations”⁶⁰ about the implications of not changing⁶¹, but create a culture of honesty and evaluation. Here, the use of a church assessment⁶² examining health, missional capacity or missional engagement may be of service.

Instilling a sense of urgency will create conflict. The change journey will unsettle and displace people. As evidenced in this research, congregational change will sometimes precipitate significant turnover, including the exit of longstanding stakeholders. All of

⁵⁹ Smith reported the finances were perilous and that the congregation in 2015 had 25% of the adherents that it had prior to the church split.

⁶⁰ Scott Susan, *Fierce Conversations* (New York: Berkley, 2004).

⁶¹ Bill Easum reports that when he does a church consultancy, he interrogates the attendance, membership and giving records and projects a trajectory based on these gauges. These gauges do not tell the whole story but may get people’s attention.

⁶² I have noted my theological and missiological misgivings about Natural Church Development previously in the Literature Survey. However, when PAOC used the NCD Church Health Assessment, Greg Laing erstwhile C2C Ontario Regional Director, indicated the biggest benefit was collective self-awareness that fuelled a need to change.

this will cost the renaissance leader the precious commodity of trust. To navigate change the leader will need relational equity to pay the fare for the journey.

Cultivate Spiritual Community

Before embarking on the change journey, the leader must take a leadership inventory. Paul Johnson lamented that the SDBC leadership pool had shrunk and he prayed desperate prayers that God would send leaders. A cohesive leadership team is required to support the change project. Kotter contends for a guiding coalition. The renaissance leader must be a collaborator who works with a dream team or vision team to forge the strategic path into a new day. Paul Johnson reveals his commitment to collaboration, when he stated, “It wasn’t my vision; it was a lot of people’s vision. I had an idea of where we should go, but I made sure the staff and elders and congregation all had a part in that process.”

However, a prior step may be required. Dysfunctional churches are populated by dysfunctional people. Broken churches are populated by broken people. The renaissance leader may step into a congregational context where spiritually mature Christ like leaders who exhibit emotional health are in short supply. The leaders may in fact not be disciples! Volunteer leaders are not always installed because of their spiritual vitality or wisdom. If the dream team or “guiding coalition” is not comprised of Christ-centered people, problems will arise. When the change journey precipitates conflict or protest, the guiding coalition may enable triangulation or acquiesce to naysayers or buckle in the face of opposition- if the guiding coalition is not comprised of people exhibiting Christlikeness.

The change leader may have to spend time not simply talent spotting but developing godly leaders and investing in discipleship and the building of *cohesive spiritual community*. The change leader must ensure that those invested with organizational leadership are committed to a journey of discipleship and transformation under the empowering Lordship of Jesus.

This means Kotter's change process is not eight steps but has a prior step. This prior step of having a core community should not be short-circuited in the desire to expedite organizational change.

The Renaissance Leader Experiences Transformation on the Change Journey

Jon Thomson recounted being deeply broken in the midst of the organizational change, and being confronted with his own sinfulness and a deeper repentance. Jon Thomson recounted an enforced dependency on God created by the challenges of organizational change and the challenge of loving those who opposed him. "To embrace weakness is not as a bad thing but actually as a defining thing for the leader. Congregational change has forced me to love enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

God has a work he wants to do *in* his leaders, and not simply work through his leaders, or simply with a divine utilitarianism use the renaissance leader as an instrument of change. God wants to effect growth and transformation in his servants.

Both Scott Weatherford and Paul Johnson recounted being humbled by the change journey. Johnson discovered a deep dependency on God was thrust on him when

he claimed “God stretched me to the point where I’ve never had to pray so desperately in my life as the first two or three years I was here.”

In echoes of 2 Corinthians 3:18, Shigematsu and Vallelly both described needing to experience greater transformation into Christlikeness. It has been noted that Delbert Enns also reported a deep heart change.

Falling in love with a Creator God and with Jesus, not for what He can do but for who He is for me, changed me. Again, it’s the way I relate then to my wife; it’s the way I relate to my children because they would know...I’m a task-oriented person and suddenly I would say, “Hey, it doesn’t matter. It’s okay. Let it go. We can do with this. We can do with less. God will supply.” That language of speaking the Gospel over and over again started to change my family.

Delbert, due to his skepticism regarding institutional church, communicated to his congregation that he needed to undergo a conversion. He had fresh encounters with the Spirit of God and the love of God.

The pastor must ask where in my heart and life and ministry do I need to encounter the Holy Spirit afresh? The journey of renewal involves believing the gospel afresh, attending to and repenting of neglected truths, turning from self-sufficiency, sin, unbelief or idolatry. Thus, the leader must be open to being broken by God and turning to God in deeper repentance, trust and surrender.

Renaissance Leaders will Develop Discipleship by Design

The 15 pastors reported an uneven approach to disciple making. The research reveals the need for renaissance leaders to create an intentional people development pathway. Here a believer, or a pre-Christian, is supported with focused resources and strategies based on where they are on a spiritual spectrum. People are not formed into increasing Christlikeness in a tidy linear fashion. Spiritual disciplines and support are not

invariably transformative but if there is no intentionality to people development then disciple making will be haphazard and spiritual formation will occur by happenstance. Missional engagement is fueled by missional leadership, missional leadership requires disciples who are equipped for missional innovation and engagement. Discipleship is the foundation of mission. The missional enterprise is built on making disciples who will make disciples⁶³ who will orientate their whole lives around Jesus and pursuing him, in loving obedience on mission. Thus a leadership pipeline presupposes and requires intentional people development.

John Neufeld indicated discipleship is most likely to occur in one-on-one relationships. John reported that despite the postmodern aversion to linear thinking TMP is wrestling with building a linear and progressive formation track. Ken Shigematsu reported that a spiritual formation strategy was under development with a number of elements already in place. The range includes: Alpha⁶⁴, small groups, training in spiritual practices, emotionally healthy spirituality, and two leadership training courses.

C4 Church and Willow Park Church offered different levels of classes, training and retreat experiences focused on different outcomes. C4 and Granville Chapel both offered their own versions of Life Transformation Groups.⁶⁵

All of the churches run groups in various sizes, shapes and configurations: home fellowship groups, missional communities, connect groups, Bible studies, and support groups. These groups may gather based on affinity, geography, season of life or life issue.

⁶³ 2 Timothy 2:2.

⁶⁴ The Alpha Course was widely adopted by the churches in this project and served the purposes of come-and-see evangelism, basic discipleship, renewal and assimilation.

⁶⁵ Here three people meet to read Scripture and share what God has said to them through reading large tracts of Scripture, there is invasive accountability and confession of sin. The reading of large portions of Scripture is analogous to inhaling large draughts of oxygen and confession of sin is analogous to exhaling bad air. There is an outward focus through evangelistic praying.

The assumption is that groups are where the action is and that disciple making will happen in groups.

Both C4 and Willow Park have disciple making that addresses a spiritual development phase or a life issue. Willow Park Church has home groups and small groups but also offers training in Hearing God and Encounter God weekends. The weekends address healing and inner holiness.⁶⁶ Both churches offer teaching and training around spiritual gifts

Waterloo MB under Chris Stevens is pursuing a people development project, the ten- year disciple with fifteen characteristics. This may seem lofty, but does offer helpful dimensions for a renaissance leader to wrestle with.

The 10-year timeline speaks to the issue of disciple making being an ongoing process supporting a long walk of obedience in the same direction. Through prescribing desired and identifiable characteristics of growth and transformation, this approach pursues outcome based disciple making. Here discipleship is understood as a lifelong journey. A disciple is defined as someone who increasingly brings all of life under the empowering Lordship of Jesus and leads and invites others to do so too. The WMB approach invites clarity and ongoing evaluation around three relational spheres: with the Triune God, the church as spiritual family, and living in a kingdom orientation to the world. This approach raises the question for a renaissance leader to respond to: what kind of people is God calling us to cultivate and grow for His glory, his mission and the benefit of the world?

⁶⁶ While the Encounter weekends have had the aim of renewing stuck believers by appropriating the power of the cross, they have also borne significant evangelistic fruit.

Lessons from Two Outliers

Dave Smith embarked on what he called a church re-plant. He used the pulpit to bring the Word of God to different congregational needs and issues. He introduced covenant membership and saw global missions support increase significantly. However, three years after he was thrust into his role, he moved out of the area, to embark on a new career.⁶⁷

Robert Gray, who introduced disciple making huddles and missional communities as per the 3DM paradigm, has reported, two years into the process no new converts and no evidence of new missional engagement. Robert took the helm of a church battered by betrayal with the criminal prosecution and incarceration of a former pastor, about two years prior to his arrival.

Both of these leaders have not seen a missional culture established. What may have contributed to this?

Dave took the helm of the church, with the founding pastor still on staff, and exercising strong ongoing influence. The presence of the leader who planted the church and the dynamics of him remaining and functioning like “the phantom of the opera”, clearly affected Dave’s ability to lead. Further factors include Dave being a peer of the planter’s sons and intermittent deep conflict between Dave and the founder.

Robert faced a resource challenge which resulted in staff lay-offs. This resulted in Robert being the only full time pastoral staff, with a part time administrator. Robert

⁶⁷ Dave had a physical and emotional crash in September 2015, and was given an extended stress leave until January 2016. At some point in February, the elders decided they would not reinstate him in his former role, and a parting of the ways “by mutual consent” was communicated to the congregation in April 2016.

transitioned a worship pastor, and the replacement leader left in less than a year, since the new worship leader was not on board with the emerging direction of the church.

Dave did not build a guiding coalition, and while Crossway has a mission statement it does not have a compelling vision or strategy. Robert led a rebranding effort of the church. The new name, Legacy, and a new set of values are displayed on the website and declared on banners in the sanctuary.

The need for vision and a guiding coalition to support the dream and the changes required to get there cannot be understated. These two leaders and the missional inertia on their watch underscore the importance of following Kotter's pathway. Robert, as his APEST shows, is highly apostolic, however *sodalic capacity does not override the need to attend to the proper disciplines of leading change*.

Despite their own personal expressions of community outreach, neither of them fostered collective missional imagination. This in contrast to Phillip Vallesly who oversaw a congregational assessment and engaged in dialog with town leaders to identify community needs. Phil became a bridge between the civic needs and the congregational assets. He participated in civic leadership. He created missional urgency and engagement by making the church aware of its own mission field with its needs and deprivations.

These two leaders highlight the need for self-care and proper support in a church transformation project. Dave exhibited youthful driven-ness and hit the wall emotionally and physically. Dave's elders initially supported him with salaried medical leave and time for recuperation. However, they did not want to walk with him in his growth and developmental journey as a younger leader and decided that he would not be reinstated in the lead role. Another factor comes into play, here, the congregation's binary theological

operating system. Here all of life is categorized into sin or righteousness⁶⁸ with no category for frailty or brokenness.⁶⁹ Robert had some support systems in place that he built around him.⁷⁰ His medical leave is illustrative of how demanding a missional renaissance project is.

Smith exerted considerable time and energy around new governance, structures, and covenant membership. Gray spent time organizing huddles and a missional community, which was poised to reproduce before his health required medical leave. Both instances may point to dealing with the structure of the organization without adequately addressing the soul of the organization. Without fresh missional imagination and the leader catalyzing the incarnational impulse, this may simply result in a rearrangement of the furniture.

“Deep change passes through a series of phases that require considerable time and energy.”⁷¹ Our two outliers raise the issue regarding time spent allowing the congregation to heal, establishing a true sense of urgency (not borne by self-preservation or survival), and was enough time spent building a cohesive enough team to guide the process?

It seems that the health of the congregations that the outliers presided over is an issue that was not adequately addressed. Gray may be right in his assessment that it is

⁶⁸ This is evidenced, for example in the elders’ meeting agendas where a list of accountability questions was reviewed and elders were invited to confess their sins to each other. This practice is perhaps more common in a Life Transformation Group, and while Scripture does exhort mutual confession of sin (James 5:16) the time spent on this outweighed Scripture reading and prayer.

⁶⁹ I communicated to one of the elders, that Bill Hybels “hit the wall”, went into counseling and continued to lead Willow. He responded, “that was Bill Hybels.” I contended there was a gospel principle at stake and someone should not be punished for hitting the wall. And that the gospel response is to provide healing and support. Spurgeon, for example battled with depression, his whole ministry. The idea that we are broken vessels and cracked pots that carry the treasure of the gospel in our broken containers, seemed to elude the elders.

⁷⁰ Gray had a Mastermind Team, Life Coach, a mentor and, a peer learning community with 3DM to support him in the disciple making paradigm.

⁷¹ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 206.

too early to tell if a missional culture is gaining traction. However, the new missional destinations must be fueled by a compelling vision. It seems that both Gray's and Smith's leadership lacked a clear vivid picture of a new story for the congregation." Vision is a specific destination, a picture of a desired future...vision is concrete."⁷²

The outliers both reveal the need to practice the discipline of personal mastery.⁷³ This requires not only a personal vision but the courage to stand for one's vision, and the ability deal with pressure to erode that compelling vision. "Mastery of creative tension brings out a capacity for perseverance and patience."⁷⁴ The absence of vision cited above removes the power and potential of fueling creative tension and fostering much needed tenacity.

Renaissance Leaders Display Relationality and Zone Sensitivity

Renaissance leadership is a relational enterprise. Missional leadership involves cultivating an ethos that reflects the relationality of the Father, Son and Spirit. Attentiveness to a theology of "relationality"⁷⁵ is particularly critical in a change journey. However, something greater than relational intelligence is required. The effective leader is able to identify which zone the congregation is in and pace, plan, and adapt the change journey accordingly. "An accurate insightful view of current reality is as important as a clear vision."⁷⁶

The change leader needs to practice contextual clarity. This relates to the ability to distinguish between false and missional urgency as indicated, but is more than this. The

⁷² Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 134.

⁷³ Ibid., 152-156.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 139.

⁷⁵ Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006), 88- 90.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 140.

leader needs to grasp the appropriate implications of where the congregation is in the life cycle. A shepherd-teacher like Matthew Price, can steward a stable and still effective congregation into a new season of multiplication and growth. Price's highly collaborative posture, drawing on apostolic leadership in the elder team, has served NLCC well.

In contrast, a take charge leader, with apostolic gifting is required to summon a broken congregation out of a decline in the life cycle. A congregation that has succumbed to bureaucracy, the routinization of charisma, and has turned inwards, is in decline towards death. This will require the generative gifts of apostle, prophet and evangelist to propel the ailing organization outwards with fresh vigour. However, a broken, wounded congregation is not ready to march boldly on mission.

When a pastor assumes the first chair in a broken congregation, in the “red zone” or “reactive zone”⁷⁷ particular wisdom is required. This zone is a place of “instability and crisis.” While people are experiencing crisis, they cannot risk substantive change. The organization needs a measure of stability to cultivate the creativity and innovation required for missional life.”⁷⁸

Most of the pastors in this project came into “red zone” contexts or congregations that were attempting to step into life beyond instability and crisis. This requires a leader who will listen, who will cultivate trust, who will have the clarity to name the dynamics at play in the congregational ecosystem, who will exercise courage, who will have difficult conversations and engage in healthy conflict.⁷⁹ This requires relational nimbleness, and an ability to read the congregational season, and identify when it is time

⁷⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 127-138.

to grieve, heal, rest, solidify, and when it is time to embark on the change journey towards fresh missional engagement.

The renaissance leader can serve people well by helping them navigate transition and the range of emotions it elicits. Bridges exhorts the change leader, “You need to bring losses out into the open- acknowledge them and express your concern for the affected people. Do it simply and directly.”⁸⁰ This cannot be done effectively simply as a change management tactic but out of authenticity and love. Where trust is broken or deeply depleted in a congregation the people are simply not ready for deep change or fresh missional engagement.

The relational posture of the missional leader is significant, even in leading a stable congregation. The leader must function with an awareness of the culture, traditions and contributions of a congregation. Relational posture and contextual awareness is even more significant in a destabilized congregation. Missional engagement cannot be imposed on people, and it takes each congregation a unique amount of time to be change ready. Osmer delineates Kotter’s⁸¹ change pathway and underscores the pivotal role of the leader’s ability to build trust and cultivate relationships. This requires more than accruing relational equity.

Reflections on the Research Project

The project was overly ambitious in its initial attempt to evaluate the capacities and competencies of 15 Canadian leaders. The data harvested was huge. The project may

⁸⁰ William Bridges, *Managing Transitions* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1991), 23.

⁸¹ This is illustrated in Osmer’s exposition of where steps two and four breakdown. Failure occurs through failing to gather people, use their gifts, empower people, and equip people. These failings are *relational failings on the part of the point leader*. See Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 207.

have benefited significantly from having a narrower focus (fewer subjects) and drilling deeper with comparative case studies. It may have benefited further from having congregations of a similar size in view. This would have created an even playing field regarding the organizational dimensions of change management. There is a significant difference in the organizational culture and complexities of a megachurch such as First Alliance Calgary and extended cells such as Legacy Church or Crossway Church. Finding congregations that were in identical stages in the organizational life cycle may have also proven beneficial.

Multiplication was an anticipated outcome of missional renewal precipitated by missional leadership.⁸² Apostolic gifting with its pioneering bias towards the expansion of Christianity should create an impetus towards new gospel works being established⁸³. Two leaders spoke of church planting⁸⁴ while several did not even voice the notion⁸⁵. However, five pastors have paved and led the way for mission through multiplication.

Tenth Church, under Pastor Ken, has embarked on a multisite journey as an expression of growth through multiplication. Tenth has three campuses and a “Third Service.” According to Paul Johnson, church planting saved his church.⁸⁶ Church planting gave fresh life and renewed hope to what had been an ailing congregation.

SDBC launched a fresh missional expression in a nearby First Peoples reserve and also

⁸² The exposition of Jesus as the prototypical missional leader who poured into The Twelve and reproduced his ministry in and through The 72 for kingdom advancement gave rise to this expectation.

⁸³ Romans 15:20.

⁸⁴ Dave Smith actually landed at Crossway as a church planting apprentice. This was put on hold during the challenges of surviving a church split. He spoke intermittently of planting another campus, but this never moved conversation to planning. Robert Gray identified the missional impact of planting a new work. He dabbled with a group in another community, as an exploration of this idea. The group never became a core team. Congregational health, even with a strongly apostolic leader, such as Robert, was doubtless a staller.

⁸⁵ This could be due to the demands of revitalization or a nascent growth through addition rather than multiplication mindset. The interviews did not address church planting readiness or explicitly mine for a multiplication vision.

⁸⁶ South Delta Baptist Church.

planted a church which in its short five years of existence has become the largest congregation in its denomination. North Langley Community Church wrestled with the call to become a reproducing church, and launched their first campus with the goal of reaching unchurched families. Granville Chapel may not “plant ten churches in ten years” but is well on the way in a multiplication journey. Granville has planted four congregations and is pursuing a fifth plant. First Alliance Church did not plant on Scott Weatherford’s watch⁸⁷, but two years after he left, The Exchange became a fledgling church plant.

The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for (1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a city and (2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing megachurches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting. This is an eyebrow-raising statement, but to those who have done any study at all, it is not even controversial.⁸⁸

Keller points to the intriguing idea that church planting is not simply an outcome of congregational renewal but a means of the corporate renewal of existing churches. An exploration of the correlation between church planting or multiplication, and fresh congregational vitality would by itself be a worthy research project. Insights into multiplication readiness or dreams of church planting were not addressed in the interview. The research would have benefited by exploring these dimensions of missional capacity.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Scott spoke of “teaching the old lady to dance.” I.E. getting the long established congregation to plant churches. The pursuit of mega church growth, and a significant building project seem to have put this aspiration on the back burner. FAC doubled in attendance during Weatherford’s five-year tenure. His successor, James Paton, has also seen numerical growth. Paton presided over the launch of The Exchange (which had incubated under Weatherford’s leadership) as a new congregation.

⁸⁸ Timothy Keller, *Why Plant Churches?* (New York: Redeemer City to City, 2009), 1.

⁸⁹ Questions such as the following would offer insight into this dimension: How ready do you perceive your congregation is to plant a new church? What might be the chief objections to this? How does your church

create opportunities for leadership development and multiplication? How would you describe the congregational levels of risk taking and adaptability?

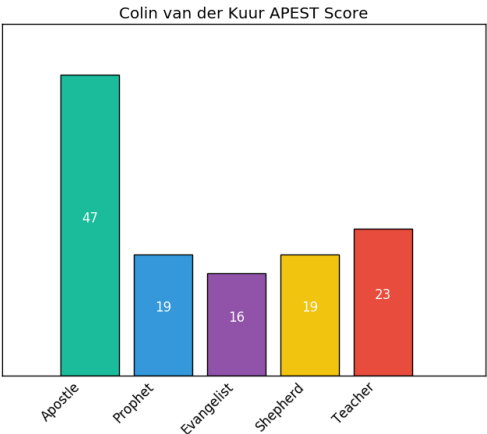
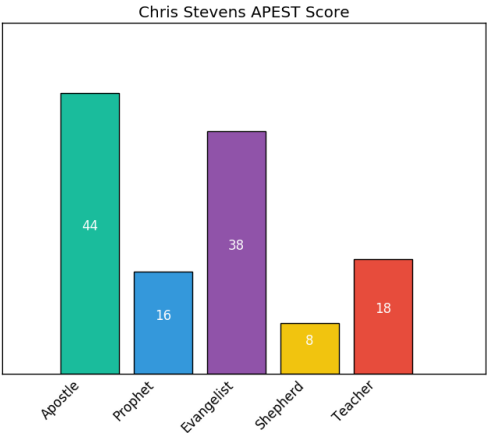
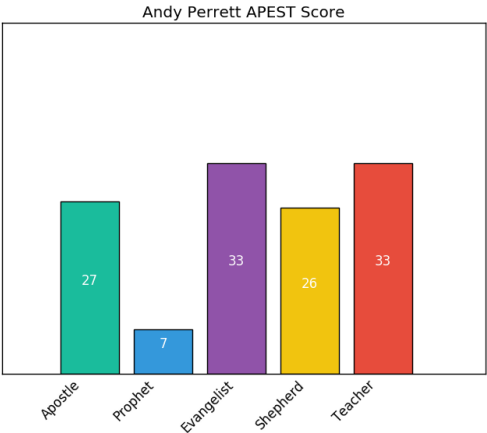
APPENDICES

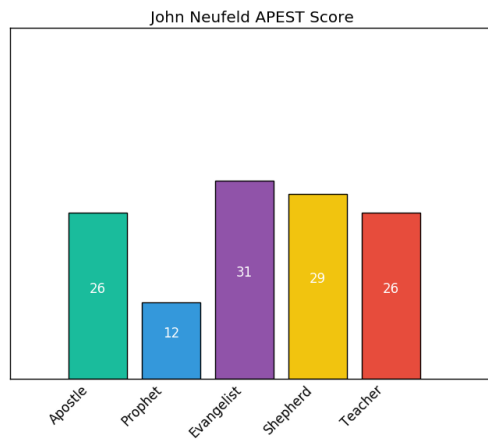
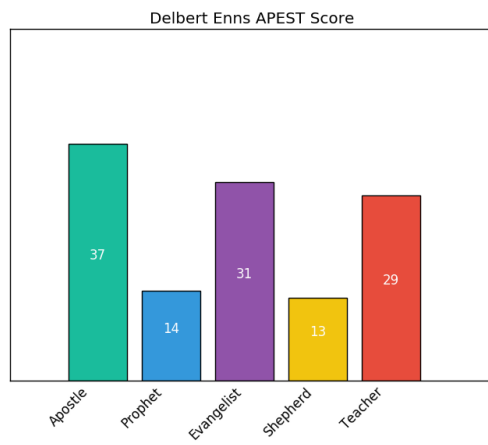
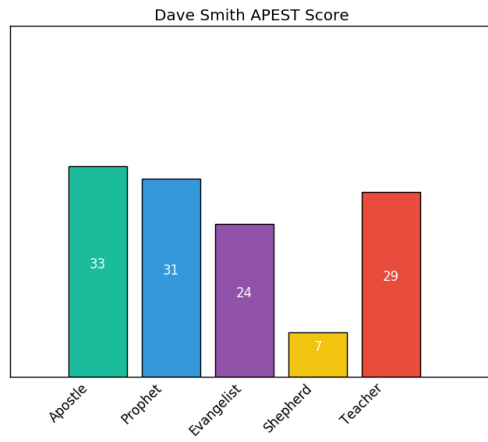
Appendix 1 Interview Questions

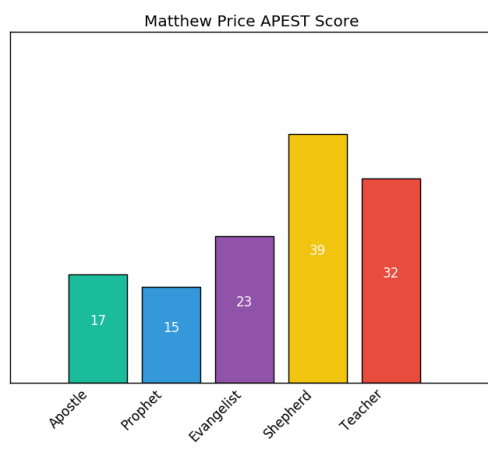
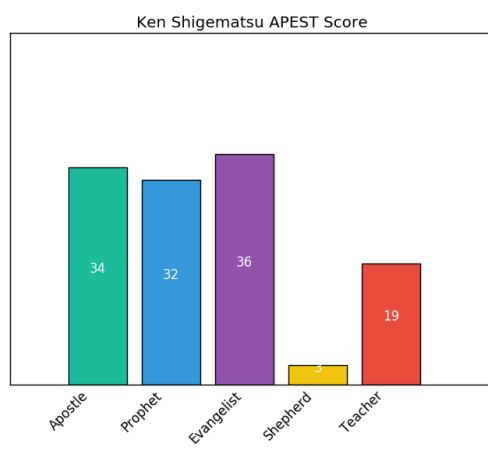
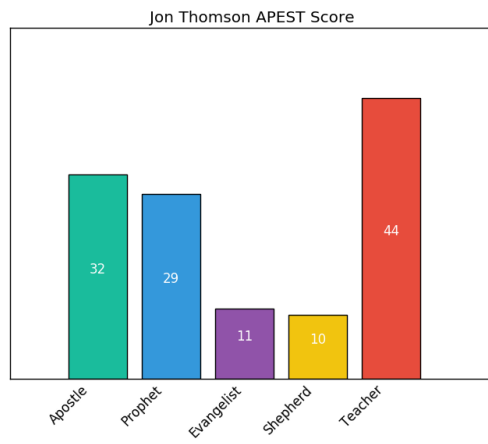
1. How and why did you assume leadership at your church?
2. How would you describe the levels of vitality and missional health in the congregation when you arrived and assumed leadership?
3. What was being done to reach the lost, make disciples and engage with the world prior to your onboarding?
4. What needed changes did you identify?
5. Describe the way you intended to bring about these changes
6. What did you do to instill a sense of urgency about change?
7. How did you go about assembling key change leaders to guide the process forward?
8. How did you discern God's new dream for the church and the ways to achieve it?
9. How did you build support for God's dream and the congregational changes it required?
10. How did you use the pulpit to communicate a vision of a new future?
11. How did you get key stakeholders on board? (Buy in)
12. How did you deal with structures, systems and behaviors that worked against the change?
13. What kind of opposition or resistance did you experience? How did you deal with this?
14. What kind of exodus or turnover did you experience during the change journey? What do you think created this? How did you respond?
15. How did you generate and celebrate short-term wins?
16. What did you do to ensure that the change effort did not run out of gas over the long haul?
17. What have you done to make sure that the new values and approaches adopted have stuck in the congregation?
18. As you look back over your leadership -what were your biggest challenges in moving the church to embrace change?
19. Can you share what God did in your own heart and life through this process of navigating congregational change?
20. Can you tell of a time it cost you personally to be a lead change agent?
21. How have you experienced pain and brokenness as part of your story and in the change journey?
22. What Biblical or theological truths became bedrock convictions for you on this journey?
23. What has fueled and sustained you and your leadership?
24. Can you describe what you have learned from your journey of leading through change?
25. If you had a mulligan, what would you differently?
26. As you review your time at _____ Church what would you say have been the biggest congregational changes adopted?

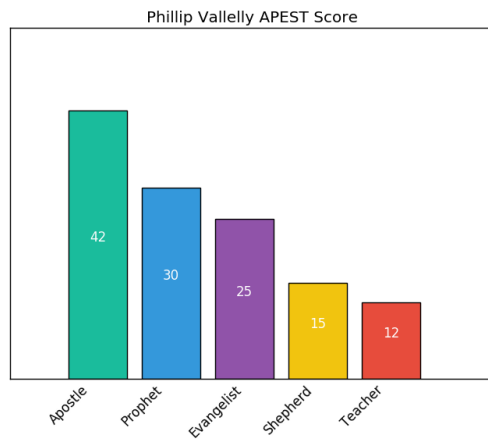
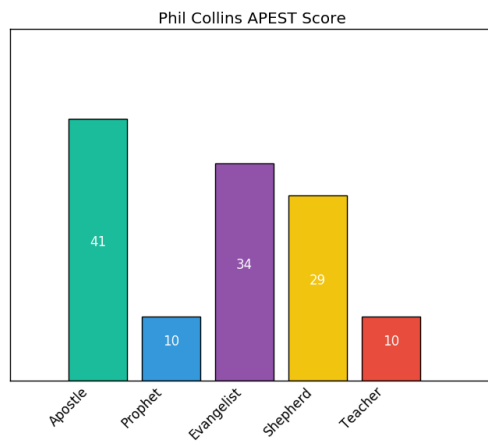
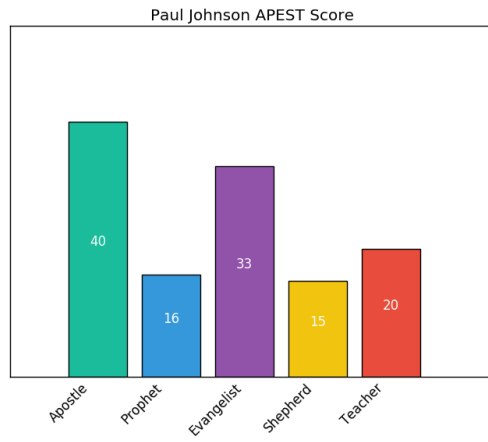
27. What kinds of changes have you personally experienced in this journey as a learner and a leader?
28. How are people finding faith today?
29. What are the disciple making processes and pathway today?
30. How are your people living on mission and being equipped for mission today?
31. How has the level of missional engagement changed during your leadership?
32. How would you describe the church's evangelism strategy and culture today?

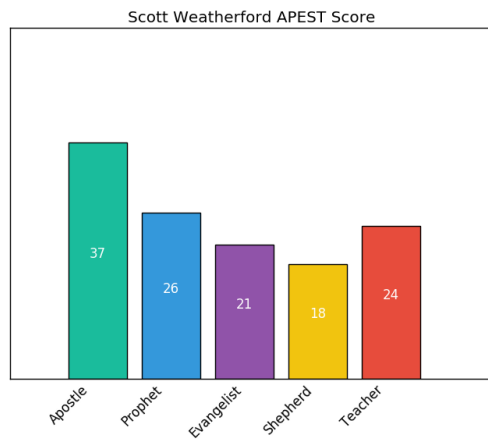
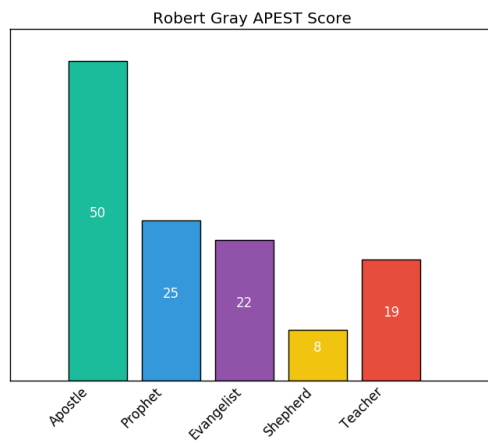
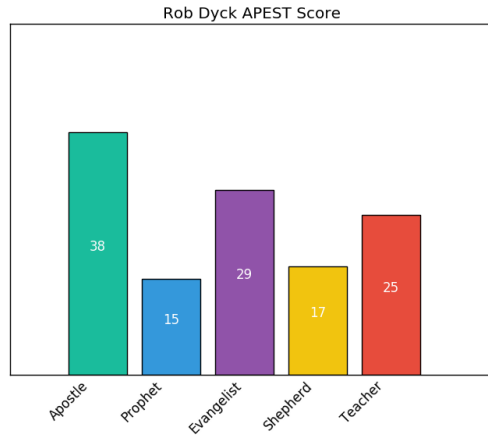
Appendix 2 APEST Leadership Gifts





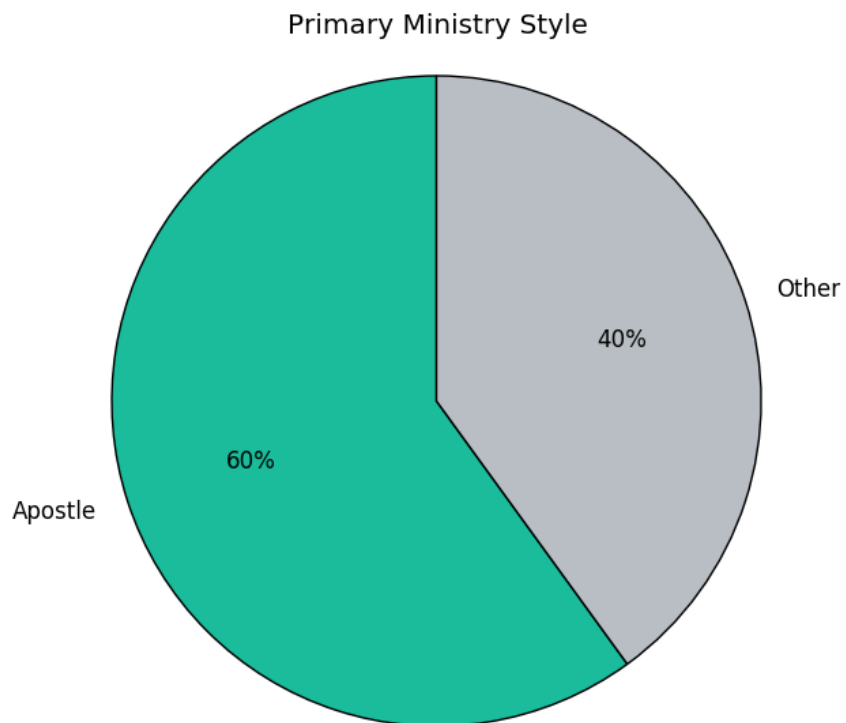




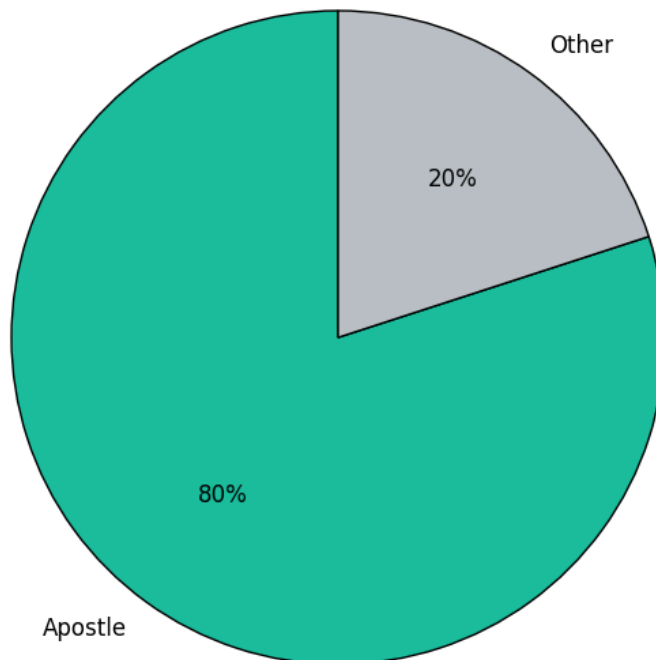


As the APEST bar graphs above show and the pie charts below show 60% of the pastors have apostle as their foundational leadership gift. When this is expanded to

apostle as the secondary gifting, 80% of the leaders have a leadership capacity that exhibits apostolic bias. This supports the assumption that the leaders surveyed would be skewed towards an apostolic leadership style. This also gives weight to the pragmatic ministry implication that apostolic leaders are drawn to and gifted for missional turnaround scenarios and should be deployed accordingly.



Apostle as Primary or Secondary Ministry Style



Appendix 3 DISC Profiles

Personality is a factor in the renaissance leader's capacity to effect change. The DISC profile was used to assess the personality of the pastors under review. Based on historic church planting assessments, where the optimal church planter profiles have been High D, High I, or D/I, it was assumed that the catalytic energies of a missional reboot in an established church would require the same profile. Leaders who have a combination of D and I or are a lone D or I "to an overwhelming degree"¹ are suited for the demands and dynamics of being a "re-envisioning pastor." The re-envisioning pastor turns around a flat or failing congregation. Malphurs and Penfold conducted research that showed 73% of successful re-envisioning pastor were High I or High D or a D/I combination. This supports the claims made in the research project. As noted in Chapter Four, while all the subjects did an APEST diagnostic, only eleven of the pastors completed the DISC test. Thus a full comparison is not available, however even these limited returns uphold the presupposition that a Highly Dominant or High Influencer leader is required for missional renaissance.

The leaders who submitted their DISC profiles were 6 Dominants (five D/Is and one D/S); one Dominant-Influencer (with the scores even); Three Influencers (two I/Ds and an I/S). While a larger sample would be required to make universal application of these findings, this does support the assumption that there is a preferred personality profile for the heavy lifting of congregational missional renewal.

¹ Aubrey Malphurs & Gordon E. Penfold, *Re-VISION – the key to transforming your church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014),135.

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